

*Selected Blog
Articles from the
Hunter-Burton
Blog & More*

Compiled by Dwight Hunter

Dave, a poem by Elton Hunter

Dave
Standing straight,
Callused hands, a swinging gait,
Dave covered his domain
In blazing heat or driving rain.
David was his given name,
But known to all the same
As Dave.

He was never a success
As known by things we possess.
The earth was his and the sky was too,
At least until the note came due.
An easy laugh, a careless smile,
Permanently tanned, and all the while,
Eyes clear crispy blue

Saw no difference in those he knew.
His word was good no matter his cost,
Whether he won or if he lost.
Storm clouds could take the crop
Or else fail to leave a drop.
Then no plants would grow
And the dust would blow
Away the hopes of the year.
But he would without fear,
Plant again the next year.
His hopes, his dreams, his everything.

Unschoolled, self-taught,
He still knew a lot,
About life in the common way,
And lived anew, each new day.
Music was his gift, his art,
Through it he did impart
Feelings unexpressed, held in.
Finding release, he could again
Be Dave.



Dora, Elton, and Dave Hunter

Purpose

This compilation brings selected blog posts from the Hunter-Burton blog to print form. I added some pictures and other content but most of the content came from blog posts. This booklet is a product of a vision I had for a printed resource and not a complete history.

It is my hope that this booklet provides knowledge, awareness, and empathy to our little corner of the world.

Dwight Hunter



Elton Hunter, 1955

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1952 airplane photograph of the Hunter house,
Belmont Township, Rooks County

*Farm Life
plus Grandpa
Dave and
Great-Granddad
John and
other Hunters*

13F22 Party Telephone Line

13F22 was our telephone number. 13 was the number of our telephone line. The F in the number stood for farm line. Our phone ring was 2 long rings and 2 short rings. I think there were 8 families, could have been more, on telephone line 13. Each family had their own unique ring. One long ring was for everyone on our line and meant trouble, perhaps fire, storms coming, or floods. Mother said that Grandma Dora complained that some would use the long ring for messages not quite as important, such as a cow had a calf. It was a party line and folks were not to listen in on other folks conversations. But, there were those who made it their practice to listen in on all calls.

Sometimes when we were on our way town on a Saturday evening, we would give 2 long blasts and 2 short blasts of the car horn at the Hulse place. Hulse's would know we were on our way to town. After Dickie and Crystal had done their "trading", they would sit in whose ever car that had the best parking spot to watch people. Dave and Popeye would be in the pool hall. My job was to go to the pool hall and tell them that they were ready to go home. Sometimes they would give me 50 cents to go back and say I could not find them.

A Collection of Emails Part One

October 11, 2016

Below is a collection of emails between Dad and I. These emails give information about many things in the Hunter family that would be lost without the knowledge from Dad. I'm glad he felt the need to share as much as he could.

Some of these emails are replies with me sharing information with Dad.

Dwight

I think about Granddad John and Dora and Dave and Dickie. Why were they among those who stayed?

John and Dora were on the farm during the beginning of the depression. They borrowed money on the farm, a debt Dave and Dickie inherited after John died. His siblings deeded the farm over to Dave with the condition that Dora stayed. Dave lost all their savings when the Webster Bank closed. Dave took over the farm during the brunt of the dirt storms. I am sure that I was an unwelcome addition to the family in 1933. Dickie was only 33 when I, the youngest, was born. After the dust storms subsided, Dave told me that the crick in 1936 flooded 13 times before July. After washing the crops and soil away, it did not rain again that year. I remember Dave trying to get alfalfa on the south 40. Grasshoppers killed it and Dave never tried again to plant alfalfa.

Washday was a real chore. Water was carried with 12 qt buckets, from the well to the house, perhaps 2 blocks, I have a picture of Dickey carrying 2 pails of water to the house. I would have carried the water, but I had to take the picture. The wood cook stove had a "reservoir" and would heat the water. In the summer it also heated the house. Dave had built a small enclosure on the porch. The heated water would be dipped out of the reservoir and carried out to the washing machine. Dickey was so pleased when she got a Maytag washing machine with a gas engine, we did not have electricity yet then. There was a clothes line north of the house. Clothes had to be hung out to dry, warm weather or frigid weather. I would be the one to go get "biscuit" wood in the summer. She wanted wood that would burn hot and fast. I would go up the crick and get small branches or get corn cobs from the pig pen. the cobs were not clean but they would burn hot. I was always scared of the sows. If they seen me at the pen with a pail, they would come a running thinking I had food for them. I would slip over there when they were not looking. I would jump over the fence and I would gather as many cobs as I could before the old sows got to me. Dave later built a small shed north of the house that you might remember. The washing machine and cream separator were kept there. Dickey must have planted a hundred Chinese elm trees and watered them with water carried from the well. I wish she could have lived long enough to enjoy electricity and running water in the house.

The trees were planted in the early 1940's. The trees were made available I think from the State. The Dust Storms of the 30's had killed out much vegetation. I have not read up on their motive. Chinese Elm trees grow fast and are hardy, I am fairly sure the folks did not pay for the trees. It may be that Dickey wanted to be able to conceal the outdoor toilet from the road. Many farmsteads had Elm tree for protection from winter winds.

According to the land abstract, John and Dora did take out a mortgage on the farm in 1904. Without the road cutting through, it would have been a very pretty place. I read some years ago that in about 1910 that land owners to the west had gone to the County Commissioners wanting a road east to town. At that time, anyone wanting to go to town had to go south and meet up with the river road from Webster to Stockton. It was done. I suppose that the road did benefit Grandad as well, but the road was the beginning of the ruination of the farm. Grandma Dora told Mavis that in the old days, there was only a low water crossing and that the crick when it flooded it would spread out across the bottom. Grandma Dora said that there was a row of cottonwood trees from the house across the crick. Highway 24, which went through in about 1936, hurt the farm even more. The flood water could no longer spread out.

Dad,

You mentioned one time in a telephone conversation a long while back that the McCubbins disappeared from Rooks County. Well, in those days, probably so. By 1900, the remaining family was living in Oklahoma near Oklahoma City.

Here are some interesting things I uncovered:

1. Zelphia McCubbin Hunter had a baby at age 15. Here is the story from her sister: She said "My sister, Zelphia, had a child when she was very young, after the baby was born there were some problems and we packed up and left Miller Co, Missouri." They moved to Rooks Co, Kansas, with Zelphia and the baby.
2. Also, the baby is shown in census of 1880 and the 1885 agriculture census of Kansas, living with grand-parents Hezekiah and Sarah McCubbin. Nothing more is known after 1885 of this child. She is not shown living with her mother after Zelphia married John E Hunter in 1877. Hezekiah and Sarah moved to Oklahoma, the child is not shown with them on any further census. The child's name listed in the 1880 census was Sarah Short, age 7.
3. The McCubbins move from Miller County Missouri to Rooks County Kansas in between 1870 and 1880 census.
4. Zelphia McCubbin born 1857, married John E Hunter in 1877 at age 19. She died 1887. Her brother George died 10 years later in Webster. All other McCubbin siblings and parents died in

Oklahoma. Sarah Ann and Hezekiah McCubbin are buried in the Spring Creek Memorial Cemetery.
Dwight

Reply: Very Interesting. Zelphia and John , according to legend, had two boys and a daughter. Wesley Hunter is buried next to the lots we have in Mt Vernon. I am blank at the moment of the name of the other boy. According to Mavis, the girl went to live with McCubbens. When cousin Hunter did the family history, he had a record of the girl but did not know what happened to her.
Dad

Dwight Reply: The other son I have listed is Orville Hunter (or James Orville in some records). He was listed in 1920 and 1930 census living in Oklahoma in the household of Luther Hawley. He is listed as a brother-in-law. (Brother-in-law to head of household, Luther, so that means Luther married his sister.)

Dwight Follow-up to previous reply by me:
Anna Hawley was married in 1910 to Luther Hawley in Oklahoma. One of their children's name was Orville's namesake. And seeing that Orville, the son of John Earl and Zelphia, was living in the same house in 1920, and that Luther Hawley was listed as widowed, I suspect Orville was very close to that family. Orville was also listed in the house in the 1930 census as brother-in-law too.

So in between 1910 and 1920, Anna Hawley must have died for Luther Hawley to be listed as widowed. Anna was listed as 32 in 1910 census so that puts her birth year at either 1878 or 1879. Odd that she wasn't listed in John Earl census records while a child, but if Mavis' recollection was accurate that Anna lived with her grandparent McCubbins maybe that would explain it.
Dwight

I was reading through the farm's abstract tonight. I came across Grandfather John's will. He willed 5.00 to Anna Belle Hawley, address unknown. That pretty well confirms that he considered her to be his daughter. Dave did not know where Orville was, but had received a letter from a Transit Hospital in Arkansas that Orville had died in 1934. The letter had been lost.
Love,
Dad

Grandad John Hunter

June 18, 2011

A few memories of Grandfather John Hunter. I never knew him as he died a few years before I was born. Dave told me of one time when granddad went to town with the wagon, Cassie, the oldest girl had a deck of cards. She got them out and they were playing with them. They did not hear granddad return. When he seen their card game, he threw the cards into the stove. I never met Cassie. Her sisters Mary and Pearl came to visit, but never Cassie. Their brother, Pete, was a mechanic for a Caterpillar dealer in Salina. Now the Model T had a very strong ignition spark. Dave said Pete could lay his fingers on the four sparkplugs until the engine died.

Grandmother Dora Hunter was John's second wife. John had come from Missouri with his first wife's family, the McCubbins. They homesteaded east of what is now Mt Vernon Cemetery. John got the poorest ground. John sold the land in the 1880's after his wife had died. Her brothers harassed John and the kids so much that he sold out and moved away. He had three kids with his first wife, two boys and a girl. The girl went to live with the McCubbins. Dave said that John lived in a stone house a mile north of the Hulse place. A hole in the ground is still there which I assume was his dugout. A pond was built on the ground in the 30's and was the only fishing and swimming hole in the area. John's sons from his first marriage were Orville and Wesley. Wesley is buried in Mt Vernon.

John wanted to be buried by his first wife which made Grandmother Dora happy, and she quickly acceded to his wishes.

John Earl Hunter Obituary

J. E. Hunter

John Earl Hunter, son of William H. and Sarah J. Hunter, was born July 27, 1854, in Montgomery County, Mo. He passed from this life at his home, six miles west of Stockton, October 26, 1929 at the ripe age of 75 years, two months, and 29 days.

Mr. Hunter grew to manhood in Missouri, and in 1877 was united in marriage to Zelpha McCubbin. To this union five children were born, two of whom are still living-Wesley W at home and Orville.

In 1878, Mr. Hunter and family moved to Rooks County, Kans., which has since been his home. Mrs. Hunter departed this life on April 29, 1887. He remarried this time to Dora Gibbons on December 25, 1889 and who survives him. To this second union eight children were born, two dying in infancy.

Those remaining with their mother to mourn their father's death are: Mrs. Cassie Bennett, Camarillion, Calif; Mrs. Pearl Timmons, Natoma, Kans.; Mrs. Mary Henderson, David W. Hunter, John E. Hunter Jr.; and Delbert Hunter, all of Stockton, Kans, Besides the children there are 20 grandchildren.

At 16 years of age Mr. Hunter was converted and united with the Methodist Church. He has always been a respected and loved citizen, and was the oldest pioneer settler in Belmont township at his death.

The funeral was conducted at the Mt.Vernon Church Sunday afternoon by Rev. J. M. Mason, pastor of the ME Church of Webster.

Grandpa Dave and the Farm

June 18, 2011

Oh My Papa was a song made popular in the early fifties by Eddie Fisher and it was a source of embarrassment to me. My family did not use such terms. My father was Dave to family, friends, and neighbors. As a child, I learned to use my father's nickname even though it limited emotional expression. I recall no command "thou shall not use personal names" but it just wasn't done.

Dave worked hard. He grew up expecting to work. The farm had a \$4000 mortgage when Granddad John Earl Hunter got it. The farm still had a mortgage when Dave got it. It still had a mortgage when I got it.

Granddad John Hunter built all the buildings with stone quarried from the farm. One of Dave's jobs was *tapping wedges in the holes drilled in the rock ledge. The wedges would make a musical sound. Dave's had a musical ear. His job was to harmonize the musical pitches the wedges would make. He would go down the row of wedges tapping each one in succession while keeping them in harmony. Eventually the rock would split evenly along the holes drilled in the rock.*

Dave never finished the 8th grade, but he could figure numbers in his head faster than I could with pencil and paper. Even so, he was never a financial success. He had a repair shop in Webster. The bank went broke, and so did he. He farmed another person's ground. He nearly died with Bright's disease during that time. He worked for the Ford garage in Stockton, but the exhaust smoke bothered him and the Great Depression worsened. Granddad John Hunter died. Dave returned to the farm: mortgage, dust storms, and floods and all. Plus there was Grandmother Dora Hunter. In return, his brothers and sisters signed over their share of the farm to Dave. It seems that some of them thought Dave was getting too good of a deal. He kept some of their letters.

Granddad John Hunter did not actually homestead the farm. Another man did that. When he had proved up on the homestead, he mortgaged the farm to an insurance company. Dave probably did not achieve the full potential of his life. His friends included the rich as well as the poor. People respected his honesty and his freedom of spirit. He said many times that a man's good word was the most important thing that he owned.

I learned an appreciation of music from Dave. We would listen to Dixieland jazz on a New Orleans radio station with all their improvising. He taught me to hear not only the melody but would point out the other instruments. Learning from him helped me to appreciate choral groups as well as bands. Music might be called his hobby. Although lacking any musical training, he helped provide music at various places. I remember him playing for a dance in the hay mow at Shaw place a mile south of our place. I was the only young person there. I danced with many of the older women and was a partner for all the square dances. I remember him playing for a dance at the Morgan house at the bottom of Borne hill. It is the only time I remember watching my mother dance. He played at the Slate schoolhouse on the Logan road. I have a memory of going to Speed for a dance. The usual instruments were piano, guitar, and fiddle. Dave could play any of them. The melody would be played with the fiddle. He knew the basic chords for the piano and guitar. Popeye Hulse, our neighbor east of us, always played the fiddle if he was there. He always played with his eyes closed. He was good playing a waltz, which was all that he played. There were also dances in the Ash Grove schoolhouse. I was given the job of shaving paraffin bars which would be spread on the floor. My brothers Duane and Max sometimes played with Dave. My uncle Pete Hunter had grand piano that was stored in the

granary when I was a kid. I heard he was very upset when he came to get it and the piano was ruined.

When I was taking Dave to the hospital, he was, it seems to me, a little apologetic about the farm. Dave said the reason Granddad John got this farm was because it had trees, water, and stone for building materials. Granddad's homestead had neither trees, stone, or water. All he had was a deep draw and very little of it could be farmed. Mavis said that Granddad John worked in town as a stonemason.

I think Dave realized that our farm was not the most desirable. He made a comment one time that he would like to have a farm where he could stand at one corner and be able to see the other three corners. There is a $\frac{1}{4}$ section a $\frac{1}{2}$ mile west of here he mentioned a desire for. The government came out with a program in the early 50's in which they would pay a land owner to put the land into grass. Dave had said one time that he would like to have the place in grass. I tried to talk him into going into the program and using the payments to buy another place, but he would not do it. He would not say why, but he did not like nor trust government programs. He was burnt real badly by government programs in the 1930s. But he was signed up for government programs in the 50s. If Dickie had been alive, it might have made a difference. In fact, if Dickie had been able to live out her life span, there may be many things different. Land was harder to get with the Webster reservoir and the Kirwin reservoir farmers looking for land.

So, here we are. The farm is into grass, something Dave would have enjoyed, and the way Granddad John would have seen it. There is a building in which Dave could have worked inside, which he would have loved to have had. Dave did most of his mechanic work underneath Pete's tree. The farm is not suitable for today's farmers with their big equipment. The farm could be used for alfalfa or bio crops, but that takes a lot of management. I go around the farm sometimes trying to see it through Granddad John's eyes.

Hope you get a better understanding of the farm,
Elton Hunter

Call for 2013 Burton-Crane Reunion

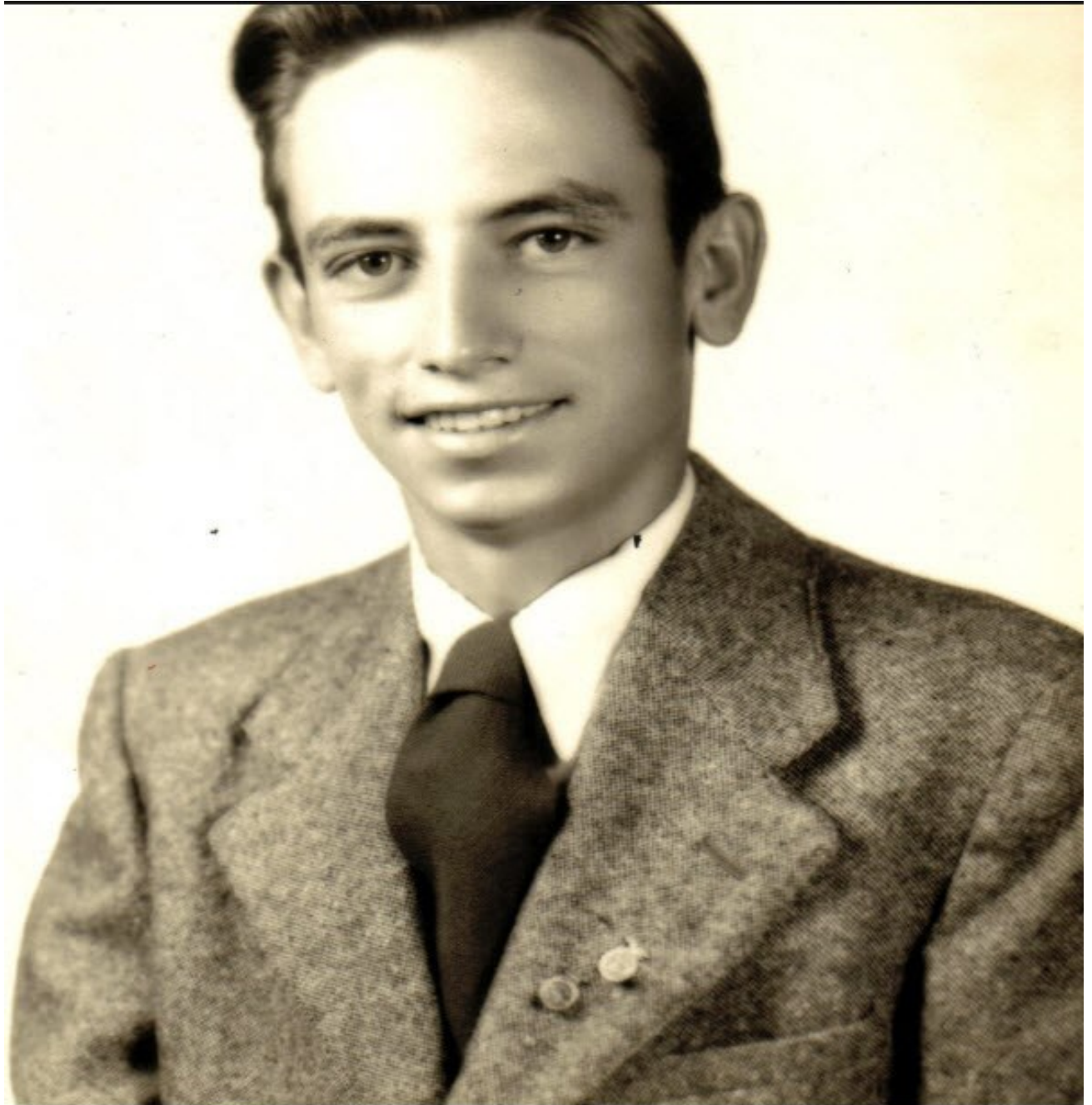
April 1, 2013 Email from Elton Hunter

We have a reservation at the Hays Golden Corral on July 13, 2013 around noon for the reunion. I apologize for my slowness in getting the word to you. I hope you still have the time to clear your calendar. Another group has scheduled the Party Room for that evening, so if any want to continue their visiting, we will need to move to another area of the room. The staff of Golden Corral has been very accommodating to us. It is a real blessing to us to have a place to meet without having to pay for the privilege.

The reunion has over \$500 in a savings account because of several large gifts. There has been discussion of using some of that money to give financial help to those who attend. We could do that. If Golden Corral was not available, I do not know of any other place in Hays that offers us the advantages that Golden Corral does. It is important to me that we have good service at our gathering, and I think it important that the staff be adequately compensated for that service. Payment for a meeting room, if that should be necessary, and fairness to the wait staff, and mailing expenses would soon eat into our nest egg. So far, a free will offering has been sufficient to cover expenses.

We have lost several faithful reunion supporters and workers within the past few years. Just to mention a few of those in recent years past that could be counted on to support the reunion include: Ferrel and Florence Burton, Betty Hunter, Mavis and Gayle Rabourn, Leona Beckley, Creta Hilgers. I know there have been others who have been very supportive of the reunion. They have left us a good legacy because family was important to them. We need to be good stewards of that which has been given to us.

Elton Hunter



Elton Hunter, Stockton High School

Dickie

Celia Charlotte

Burton Hunter

Celia Charlotte Burton Hunter Obituary

Celia Charlotte Hunter, known to all her friends and loved ones as "Dickie", daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Burton, was born near Webster, Kansas on June 17, 1900, and passed away at the Hadley Memorial Hospital, Hays, Kansas on November 8, 1950.

She attended school at Webster where she graduated and taught a rural school. On April 21, 1921, she married Dave Hunter and together they established their home near Stockton. To this union five children were born: a daughter, Mavis, and four sons, Duane, Floyd Earl, Max, and Elton, of whom Floyd Earl passed away in infancy.

She taught several terms of school since her marriage, enjoying her work very much.

She was a member of the Stockton Methodist Church and the Sunflower Club.

She is survived by her husband, David W. Hunter, four children: Duane Hunter and Max Hunter of Stockton; Mrs. Gayle Rabourn of Kansas City, Kansas, and Elton at home; one grandchild, Douglas Rabourn, of Kansas City; her mother, Mrs. Hattie Burton, of Plainville; four sisters, Faunie Hilgers, Vera O'Brien, Leona Burton Rickie, all of Plainville; Ruby Gitthens, of Denver; and one brother, Boyd Burton, of Hutchinson.

Funeral services were held Friday at the Methodist Church in Stockton, conducted by Rev. S. Mancil Bell, and internment was in the Mt. Vernon Cemetery.

She always learned to watch for us,
Anxious if we were late.
In winter by the window,
In summer by the gate.
Her thoughts were all so full of us,
She could never forget!
And so I think that where she is
She must be watching yet.
Waiting till we come home to her
Anxious if we are late-
Watching from heaven's window
Leaning from heaven's gate.
-Margaret Widdener-

Mrs. Dave Hunter, much loved woman of the Stockton community died last Wednesday night, Nov. 8 in Hadley Memorial Hospital at Hays, where she was making a brave fight for her life. She had been ill of a rare blood disease for over two months, and had been believed to be improving. She was fifty years of age and had spent all her life in Rooks County. She is survived by her husband, three sons and a daughter. Funeral services were held Friday afternoon at the Methodist Church, with Rev. S. Mancil Bell in charge and burial was in Mt. Vernon Cemetery.

An introduction to Celia Charlotte Hunter, better known as Dickie Hunter

I sit in my study surrounded by many reminders of my mother, Dickie, your grandmother.

I have thought many times of the perhaps necessity of telling you about your Grandmother Hunter, Dickie for you never knew her. I know little of why she was called Dickie.

Her death was front page news of the Rooks County Record, but the headline did not read that Celia Hunter had died. The article spoke of Dickie Hunter for that was her name to everybody and anybody. Your Grandfather Dave called her Dick when they were first married, but he could not explain to me as to why. I do not know if she changed Dick to Dickie or if someone else did that. .

There is a picture on the wall of my study of a pastoral scene of a young woman, several cattle, and in the background there are several buildings. This picture is a page from some magazine. I found this picture up in the attic of the old rock house. This picture and a box of papers from her school teaching days are about all that I have of Dickie.

So why did she keep that page from a magazine? What is the significance of the picture? I can only guess and surmise a reason. Dickie may have identified with the young woman in the picture. She almost certainly would have herded the cattle for Dave until Duane and Max were old enough to herd cattle. The picture is a peaceful scene. The picture may have been her vision of her life as a farmer's wife. The cattle are standing in a pool of still water. Whatever the reason, when I look at the picture, I think of your Grandmother Dickie.

Dickie Hunter–Teacher

Celia (Dickie) Burton received her Rooks County diploma in Stockton May 25, 1916. Dickie took a Normal Training Exam June 30, 1919. Her grades were good: 95 Psychology, 83, Physiology, and 80 in Civics. In 1920 Celia Burton received her diploma from Webster High School. (no date is on the diploma) The class motto was animis opibisque parati. (I read elsewhere that it means Prepared in Minds and Resources.) Class flower was pink rose.

Dickie was a graduate of a Normal Training Course June 30, 1920. Dickie only taught school, I do not know where, for one year.

Celia Charlotte Burton married David William Hunter on April 20, 1921 in Phillipsburg by a probate judge. Their witnesses were Dave's sister, Mary, and her husband Sam Henderson. That would have ended her teaching career for several years. Married women could not be teachers in those years. She was able though to buy her pride and joy with her teacher's salary, a sewing machine.

Dickie resumed teaching during the World War II years. Teachers were scarce. The prohibition against married women teachers was forgotten. She received an Elementary Teaching Certificate from Hays Oct. 5, 1942. Alcona, west of Webster, may have been her first school after her return to teaching.

I remember going with Max after school at Webster to bring her home. She stayed with Roscoe Grovers during the week. Dickie never learned to drive so usually Dave would take her to school Monday morning and get her Friday afternoon. I would guess the reason for teaching was that they needed the money, but I really believe she loved teaching. This farm has always had a mortgage on it until we were able to pay it off in the 1970's.

I have had her former students speak well of Dickie. Many of her students were at her funeral. She later taught 2 miles west of here at the Grover's and Roy's school. She then taught five miles north of home at the Turnbells, Banes, and Stices school. I was in the seventh grade then and sometimes would grade papers for her. She was teaching at Webster Grade School when she became ill in 1949.

Dickie's box and the kerosene lamp

Email from Elton Hunter

Jan 29 2013

I had a panic attack last night about a notebook of "Dickie's stuff. " And I could not find the book. Finally a memory begun to come to me. I had kept the book on a shelf in my office. I then had thought that if there was a fire, the book could be severely damaged or lost. There is a metal box in on the west side of the garage. My thinking was that if there was a fire, that that might be the safest storage area. I dug through the Hunter/Burton stuff in the box and at the very bottom of it was Dickie's book.

Dickie was not a keeper of other folks stuff, but she had kept some of her stuff. Where? In a shoebox in the attic. I found the box when I was preparing to build the upstairs room. I can picture her getting upon a kitchen chair, sliding the cover back, and taking the shoebox down to put a memory into it. It was her "stuff." Dave had a metal box for his stuff that we kids were not to open. I still have that metal box and his "stuff." Some may fault Dickie in that there was little pertaining to us kids in her box. Dickie belonged to a neighborhood women's group, the Sunflower Club. She kept their little annual book in her box. The Dust Bowl changed life here on the farm. Neighbors would have a sale and move out West. Idaho or California were popular destinations. Dickie's circle of friends decreased, and perhaps the Sunflower Club book helped her remember them. World War 2 changed life for Dickey. Her friends had moved away but she had a chance to expand her life in another direction. Many regular teachers became soldiers and many schools, especially country ones did not have a teacher. The taboo that married women could not be a teacher was broken. Dickie went to Fort Hays College and received a teaching certificate. Her certificates were in "her box."

Mavis never understood that my childhood was different from hers. When she was growing up, she had neighbor kids to play with. When I grew up, there were few neighbor kids. Because of gas rationing, the folks did not visit any neighbors other the Hulse's, and their kids were grown and gone. When Mavis came home from school, there was likely a fresh baked loaf of bread on the kitchen cabinet. When I got home from school, Dickie would not be here and only be here on weekends,

I wrote a while back of the kerosene lamp. How did we keep all that stuff while we were moving from parsonage to parsonage? In the long winter nights, we would read or study by its feeble light. Mavis had the job of washing the chimney each day, trimming the wick, and maybe filling it with kerosene. We did not listen to the radio on those long winter evenings. The radio was battery powered much like a flashlight battery. It could not be recharged and was expensive. Dave listened to the weather forecast and the markets and that was it. Folks would sit around with the kerosene light and study, read, or talk about things. Sometimes the Hulse's would come over and the folks would play cards by the light of the lamp. All of our life was centered around that one light. It would sit on top of the wood cook stove. Sometimes it would be on the round oak kitchen table if someone needed to study or just to read.



Siblings

Duane

Max

Mavis



Duane Hunter
World War II Veteran
Married Betty Glendenning
Steve Hunter
Brenda Jo Hunter (1954-2022)

BIOGRAPHY
OF
DUANE DAVID HUNTER

By: Mavis Hunter Rabourn

Duane was born in Rooks County, Kansas on February 22, 1922 on a farm which his father, Dave Hunter, rented from Tom Baxter. When Duane was two or three, Dave developed Bright's Disease. There were no antibiotics and the only treatment was rest, diet and sweat baths, twice a day. Duane learned to play without making noise because it would interrupt the sweat baths.

Duane was well behaved. His mother said she could sit him on the counter in the grocery store and he'd never move; if she tried that with Max or his sister, the store would be in shambles.

The family moved to another farm in 1926. That was the year Duane acquired a brother, Max. In 1928, Duane acquired a sister, and he started school at Ash Grove, a country school. When he was seven, the family moved to Stockton where his father worked in a garage.

Duane repeated the first grade because the Stockton School didn't think the country school had taught him well enough. Duane told his mother he was sure getting tired of that Little Red Hen. It must have been a bad experience because Duane and Max taught their sister the first grade before school started.

Granddad Hunter died in 1929, and in 1931 Duane's family moved to the farm and there has been a Hunter living on the farm to this day. Duane didn't like to move. Maybe it was because they moved around so much for the first ten years of his life; he became wary of moving to a new location. When he worked for Kansas-Nebraska, he refused transfers that may have been beneficial to him.

He lived six and one-half miles from Stockton. When in high school, he only had one way to get back and forth to school. ...hitch hike. Our neighbors commented that he must not fool around in town because he came by in the evening at almost the same time every day. Upon reaching home, he changed clothes, grabbed a handful of crackers and went out to do his chores. Duane liked school, especially the Ag Program; however, he wasn't much into reading, and Max wrote a lot of book reports for him.

Duane was a good looking boy, a statement with which I believe he'd agree. There was a mirror between the kitchen and outside door, and Duane never left the house without first checking his reflection in the mirror.

Duane graduated the spring of 1940, not the best time to be out looking for a job. Fortunately the airplane industry was gearing up, and I believe he first worked at Stearman and then went to work at Boeing. When the letter came from the government that Uncle Sam wanted him, he didn't exactly jump up and down with joy. After all for the first time in his life, he had a job paying good money.

The Army Air Corp took him, possibly because he'd worked in Wichita at Boeing. It was a good fit for Duane. The Air Corp had a relaxed attitude and as long as you did your job when it was to be done and did it well there were no problems. Duane was meticulous about his work and did not have to be constantly supervised.

His first station was Ogden, UT, and then to Burbank, CA, for training. He was stationed in Manchester NH for some time. This was when the B-29's came out. He may have started working on them at that time. He was sent to Newfoundland, which he thought was the coldest spot on the planet. He told of the key bird that lived there. It stood first on one foot and then the other, and said "Key... key-- Christ it's cold." The chilblains he got while walking to school, finally paid off. Because cold temperatures made his feet ache, he was transferred to the Azores, a much better climate, and made line chief which gave him a promotion.

Max made a stopover there on his way to Europe. It had been a year since they had seen each other and they enjoyed the time together.

Duane had planned to get married when he got back, but when he was 'Dear Johned' he extended his time there for another six months. They gave him officer status and he learned how the other half lived. Very Well.

When Duane returned, he found a job with Quenzer and then with Kansas-Nebraska Natural Gas Company.

I would like to say that the rest of his life was fulfilling and happy. But he never quite got over his girlfriend dumping him, and Max's death left a hole in his soul that he was never able to fill.

Duane Hunter, July 11, 1966

RIP.



Max Hunter
World War II Veteran

Max Hunter Obituary

Max Hunter, son of Dave and Celia Hunter, was born at Stockton June 4, 1926 and passed away June 15, 1955 at McPherson at the age of 29 years.

He went to school at Webster and graduated from there in 1943.

He entered the service in 1944 and served the Signal Corps overseas in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, and Athens, Greece. He helped set up a radio station for broadcast of the first free general election in Greece. He was discharged in 1946.

He was employed in the oil field business near McPherson at the time of his accidental death.

His mother preceded him in death November, 1950.

He leaves to mourn his father, Dave; one sister, Mavis Rabourn of Hastings, Nebraska; two brothers, Duane and Elton of Stockton, one grandmother, Mrs. Hattie Burton and other relatives and friends.

WHEN I GO HOME

No tears, no sorrowing farewells
No drooping eyes, no anguished breast;
I am but quitting scenes where dwells
The sadness that my soul oppressed:
Then let my care-worn spirit rest
When I go home.
No clasp of hands in last good-bye
Disturb my weary, waiting soul;
But, rather love-light fill the eye,
And waiting Hope point to the goal:
Let peace, unbroken, o'er me roll
When I go home!

Services were conducted Friday, June 17 at the Smith Chapel by Rev. Elmer N. Rinkel. Burial was in the Mt. Vernon Cemetery with VFW and American Legion members conducting military services.

Max Hunter Letter to Home

Belgrade Yugo
Monday night
27th of May 1946

Hello Peoples:

I got a letter from Dickie today and so I better knock out a little bit of an answer. I am feeling fine and it may be true that I'm putting on a few pounds although I can't be sure as the night life takes off quite a bit of excess water. I'm at the US Embassy now as I have to sleep here in the day and stay at night one out of four. It is a rough life. I have the radio on and am getting some American music. It is a shortwave broadcast from the states. That is the only good thing about radio – we get to hear the music and the news. But the music is the same as when I left home. I don't know if there are any new songs being written or not.

The last letter I got from Wilma was dated March 1st so I don't know if I am still on her list or not. I haven't heard from Lucille or Louise or some of my other old flames so I reckon the only to get a guys backyard cleaned up and the junk hauled away is to go overseas, but I could think of a lot easier ways to do the same job.

I have two mandolins. I bought one in Greece and when I came here a guy had left one here that he had bought and hadn't taken home so his friends gave it to me. It is really a wonderful box. It is the best one I ever had a hold of and I don't reckon Dave has ever seen one any better. It is inlaid in mother of pearl and really sounds good but I can't get mush out of it and I want Dave to send me some diagrams on how he plays the violin. I don't mean the basic fundamentals cause I think I have them mastered as well as anyone. But I want to see how to work the double stop or something like that. It is where you play two strings at once. If you can send me a diagram for a song or two I think I can get the idea but I don't know where to start. And I also want to know the chorus in E, C, D and all the other ones that I ought to know so I want the old man to get busy and draw me some pictures and to make sure I can read his writing.

Don't bother to send any more of your letters V mail as they are not photographed any more and when they get to me they are in a hell of a shape although I do manage to read them but I think my regular mail is straightened out no so I ought to get along now ok.

This language is the fifth language I have started to learn. And I am having a hell of a time. I can get along with a girl that can't speak English any more between my English, French, German, Italian, Greek, and Serbian (Yugo). It can get along pretty well. I know quite a little Italian as it is a easy language to speak. You don't have to twist your tongue all out of shape to say "Give me a kiss baby". But Greek and Serbian a man has to about break his jaw bone to say it the correct way but I get by.

All the girls over here want to go with Americans so they have a chance to marry one and then they will have a way back to the states. That is the only way and I don't blame them a damn bit. I am going to tell you what I saw the other day. Across the street from where we live there is a OZNA House or secret police. And if they see a girl with an American they pick her up and take her there so to teach her a lesson as they don't want their people to hear us guys tell about the United States and nice it is there as it undermines their politics.

But the other day I was sitting in the balcony from our room and I could see the door of this OZNA joint and I saw two guys take a girl in. I recognized her as a girl one of the guys had been going with. Well about 45 minutes later she came back out on a stretcher with her head all bandaged up and knocked out colder than a fish. This guy has never seen this girl since and her

folks don't know what has happened to her. They said she went downtown to get something and she has never been seen since I saw her last. So draw your own conclusion to the kind of a government they have here and see if it don't make a guy mad. It is all run by the Russians although they don't admit nothing but we all know. That is why I don't blame any girl for wanting to get out of this country. And another thing. When a Russian soldier sees a girl and he decides he wants her he says "Lay down, we liberated you". But the Russians hate our guts. So they are no better than the heathen Japs that men lost their lives to exterminate. Sometimes we wonder if we will get out of Yugo alive as we know we are sitting on a powder keg and everyone is smoking.

The people here all like us and think a lot of us but they dare not show any of it. I am not worried about myself though as I expect to leave around September and I don't think anything will happen before then but I will be glad as hell to leave. Although it is the best deal I have ever had in the army and very few guys have ever had one this good. I could get out of here now as far as that goes but I be damned if I am going to run from the dirty sons of their mothers.

Well that is about enough of blowing my stack and if people could see the stuff that the UNRRA gives to these countries that is instead going to feed the armies that make possible all of these criminal assaults on human decency and indifference they would think twice before they donate to any organization. And I say right now don't ever donate another dime to another organization that wants to help the needy in Europe. Maybe the needy can't help it. But our people before us fought for what we have today and these people are no better than ours were. Besides three fourths of the stuff never goes past an Serbian or Russian army camp.

Well this is all for now. I am ready to back up all I have said but don't mention anything I have said so that it might get in the papers. As the Russians would find out and it may go rough on me as they may say I am a spy. Anyway the bigshots in Washington know what is going on because I sent messages to Washington about it.

Well so long now and don't let Dave put off sending me the diagrams cause I damned well want them and some E strings. And some picks. I have a wonderful mandolin and I am going to learn to use it right.

So long for now

Mouse

(A spy for OZNA – I beat women and small children in spare time as it really is fun to see them beg for mercy.)

BIOGRAPHY
OF
MAX HUNTER

By: Mavis Hunter Rabourn

Max was born in Rooks County, Ks on June 4, 1926, in a farm house on the river road. A blonde-haired, blue-eyed boy with a sunny disposition, he was the one with the cute quips and who could charm the birds out of trees. A teacher told his mother that it was difficult to discipline him when you were laughing at his antics.

Max, Elton and Mavis attended school in Webster. Max's above-average intelligence got him into and out of numerous sticky situations. Mavis told him if he would study harder, he could make Valedictorian. He said, "I don't want to be Valedictorian". Max preferred hunting instead of going to school and had a number of skipped days.

Someone asked my father, Dave Hunter, how it happened that out of four kids, one went to Stockton and three went to Webster. Dave said that no school system could have survived all four.

One day he walked out of school, and when Prof. Stricklin asked where he was going. He said, "To the river. It's too hot for school today". The girls in the sewing class saw him walking down the road, and asked, "Where's Max going?"

I said, "I don't know." Sometimes I wanted to disown him.

He was suspended for two weeks and Dave Hunter had to sign an excuse slip so Max could get his diploma. I heard my father mutter, "I wouldn't do it, except I want him to graduate."

Max received his "I Want You Letter" from Uncle Sam three days after his 18th birthday. He got a deferment for wheat harvest and then he had appendicitis so his deferment was for four months.

Since Max could type and that automatically put him in the Signal Corp. He made High Speed Operator and a M-1 Sharpshooter. He learned to be a sharpshooter because he shot rabbits (in the head). He was paid a dime for each rabbit if the skin wasn't torn. He was thus able to buy his rifle and shells, his class ring, and typewriter. At Webster you had to have your own typewriter to take typing classes. He also learned to shoot a pheasant on the

wing. I don't know that he earned any money but his mother didn't have to pick buckshot out of the bird.

After Signal Corp, he took further training at a place called The Farm near Washington D.C. He wrote and said that it wasn't anything like our farm.

Max flew Europe. The plane stopped at the Azores to be refueled, and when Max told his commander that his brother was stationed there, the commander decided that a tire on the plane needed to be replaced, giving Max and Duane time together.

He first went to Paris and from there to Belgium. There are many time lapses in his military record. He told about some things and some he didn't.

He was sent to Italy to set up communication lines. There was going to be an election and the communists were trying to take over the government. While in Rome, though not a Catholic, he went to hear the Pope give his Easter Address. He said it seemed like something he'd never have another chance to do.

The communists were also trying to take over the government of Greece, and he was sent there to set up communication lines. They went by Merchant Marine ship. Their commander said mines hadn't been cleared out of the Mediterranean Sea and it was too dangerous for the Navy ships. Max said that as each man in his group climbed aboard the ship, they were given a fifth of whiskey. He said that was probably done, so they wouldn't think about how dangerous it was. He didn't tell anything about setting up communication lines. He only said, he learned to say "Give me a kiss, baby, in Greek".

He then went to Belgrade, Yugoslavia. He was quartered across the street from the KGB Headquarters. One day he saw the KGB drag a girl up the stairs into their area. When they brought her down, she was out cold. He never saw her again. She was the girlfriend of one of his buddies and when the boyfriend went to see her parents. She wasn't there and they wouldn't admit they even had a daughter.

Max said he monitored the radio channels and heard the conversation when a Russian jet shot down an American plane. They were laughing and joking about it. He reported it to Washington but the Russians claimed it was an accident. Max had the location where the plane went down and accompanied two men from graves unit to retrieve the dead. He didn't say what kind of plane was shot down. In his letters, he told us not to tell anyone about what the communists were doing because he reported everything to Washington, and if the communists found out, he could be shot as a spy.

Max was held in prison, he didn't say why but only said they were given bread and water and flogged three times a day. While in prison, the communists gathered up girls who had gone with GI's and did terribly vile things to these girls.

He didn't say how he got out of prison, but he left Belgrade in the company of two men he'd never seen. He was given passes for the English and French when passing through their areas. They were instructed to give him such help as he might need. Somewhere in Vienna, someone pushed him in a canal. He said he couldn't swim so must have walked out.

When they reached Italy, the men told Max they would disappear at some point and that he mustn't sound an alarm or worry about them. In Florence, as he turned a corner, he realized they weren't with him. He kept going until he reached Naples, where he was to board a ship for America. Because the ship was leaving soon, the men on board were throwing their money to the crowd as it would be worthless to them any place else.

Max said that as he was walking toward the ship, he came face to face with the two men who had led him out of Belgrade. They were dressed as peasants from the hills. Max said they must have died a thousand deaths when they saw him, for fear he would, in some way, indicate that he knew them.

From the time Max arrived in Kansas until he was killed in an automobile accident, he would at times stare off into space. Duane said he told him that someone wanted to kill him because he knew something he wasn't supposed to know. Duane asked what it was, Max said if you knew, then they'd want to kill you too.

Max was a goodhearted person and always stood up for anyone who was being mistreated by a bigger or more powerful person, and had an overwhelming hatred for the communists. A few months after he came back, our mother's brother came to visit. The uncle spoke of a group that he was working with in Mexico. Max said it was a communist group and ordered him out of the house. After Max's death, in going through his belongings, we found the passes from the Government that were to be shown to the French and English and a set of flock picking tools.

Max Hunter, June 15, 1955

R.I.P.



Mavis Hunter
Married Gayle Rabourn
Doug Rabourn
Jolene Rabourn

Mavis Marie Hunter Rabourn Obituary

Surrounded by her family and dear friends, Mavis Hunter Rabourn passed away on October 3, 2011.

She is survived by her husband, Gayle Rabourn, son, Douglas Rabourn, daughter, Jolene Lanier, grandchildren, Kenneth Rabourn, Daniel Rabourn, Warren Rabourn, Rachel Wilson, Christopher Lanier, Rhiannon Lanier, Michael Lanier, great grandchild, Kimberly Rabourn, and brother, Elton Hunter.

A memorial service will be held at Christ United Methodist Church, 9045 Howard Dr. at 3:00 pm on Oct. 16.

Published by Houston Chronicle on Oct. 11, 2011.

Aunt Mavis

Aunt Mavis was the only sibling of Dad I knew. His brother Max died in 1955. I was too young to retain any memories of his brother Duane before he died in 1966.

I remember one Christmas that there was a present under the tree from Mavis Rabourn. "Who is Mavis," I asked my mom. "She's your daddy's sister."

"Wow, I thought to myself, Dad has a sister!"

We made a quick trip of a vacation in the summer of 68. How do I know it was 1968? The HemisFair was going on in San Antonio and we visited it. But Aunt Mavis and her family lived in Houston. That was the first and only time I visited her in Houston.

I have two blog posts after this page. One tells the story of me being hooked about learning the universe, space travel, the stars, our planet and its moon because of Aunt Mavis. To this day I marvel as to what is being discovered in the space that surrounds Earth. The other blog post is about lifelong learning lessons on how to build a fence.

After moving from the farm, I saw Aunt Mavis three more times in my life at family reunions. She always had fun stories to tell about the Hunter family.

Thank you, Aunt Mavis, for making me aware of space travel and of the stars at such a young age, and for sharing your storytelling skills.

Dwight Hunter

[Aunt Mavis: To Houston From Kansas](#)

My Aunt Mavis passed away this week. She was a girl who grew up on the Kansas prairie and made Houston, TX her home. I looked forward to her visits as a young lad because Aunt Mavis could regale me with her stories of her youth. She was a very good storyteller.

Back then, there was no Internet, no cable television, only one television station by antenna on a good day, a few radio stations, and the nearest neighbor was measured in miles, not feet. So, visitors from a big city like Houston was always a treat for me. But Aunt Mavis brought that big city and country living to me. She, without knowing it, gave me the first glimpse that yes living out in the middle of a Kansas prairie didn't restrict my dreams.

But she had that laugh that always made a good story better. And she told some whoppers! I think her favorite subject to tell stories on was her brother Max. I never met Max as he died before I was born. And I never met the mother of my Dad either because she had died at a young age too. And both my Dad's (Aunt Mavis') other brother Uncle Duane and their father (my Grandpa Dave) died when I was very young. I have no memories of either. So for me, Aunt Mavis was the only other connection to my Dad's life before he was married.

One day I received mail. Getting mail in those days was like finding a treasure. Aunt Mavis had sent me a big book about space exploration from Houston's mission control store. I was hooked on space exploration learning ever since. I was fascinated with the information about Apollo and its launches, and at the time, the planned launches. I still love learning about space. Thank you Aunt Mavis for providing that spark.

And Aunt Mavis could write. She wrote a rough draft of a novel that she sent to me to read. The novel was based off the experiences of living in the country and the struggles of gaining that personal identity that all teenagers struggle finding.

Now to one of my favorite Aunt Mavis stories. This story was about her brother Max and when he had the mumps.

It seems Max had the mumps and being a young boy was ordered to stay in bed no matter what. Max was spending his bedtime over at his cousin's house in a town on the other side of the county from the farm. It seems that Max liked the company of his Aunt and cousins while temporarily bedridden. But Max was following the doctor's order—no way was he getting out of that bed.

Well, it would seem that one day during Max's stay, a mighty storm was rolling across the plains; a storm that could create a tornado. Now Aunt Mavis and the others at the farm were heading to the cellar for protection because there is nothing like a powerful storm gaining more energy and strength on the Plains.

The mighty storm did create a tornado, and it was heading for the town that Max and his cousins lived.

“Max, Max,” his cousin cried running into the bedroom. “Get out of bed and head down to the basement!”

“You know the doctor’s order,” Max replied. “I can’t get out of this bed.”

His cousin replied, “Well, you stay in the bed if you want to but there is a tornado heading this way and I’m going to the basement!”

Needless to say, Max didn’t stay in bed!

Thank you Aunt Mavis for keeping history alive with your stories and with your wonderful way of telling stories so well



Building Fences

I wrote a blog post a few months ago about my Aunt Mavis celebrating her life. Her husband, Uncle Gayle to me, died a few weeks ago. Both of their urns were transported up to Northwest Kansas a few days ago and were buried in a country cemetery.

This picture is a picture of the land that Aunt Mavis and Uncle Gayle owned.

That would be past tense. Not only in death but in land deed reality. The land was sold after Aunt Mavis died.

When I was 13, my Aunt and Uncle came up from Houston, Texas to build a fence on this land. I was expected to help, and boy, did I. My Dad was in seminary training and about ready to become a full-time minister. But he was home at the time.

You might look at this picture and think this is nothing but straight, run along flat land. That would be a wrong guess.

A turn to the right would reveal a little country road using switchbacks for trucks to get up a hill. A turn to the left, a ravine so deep that the sun might never shine on some spots. Looks are deceiving.

I remember heat, sweat, dust, digging post holes into pure rock, standing at a 45 degree angle to be straight, ticks galore, swinging a hammer, stringing barbed wire, and thirst that seemed to go on for many days straight. Miles of fence building.

Picking off 10 ticks out of my hair each day was the norm.

But I learned a few lessons. Hard work, despite a few ticks, creates accomplishment. Working as a team makes an insurmountable task possible. Muscles you never knew existed became a learned fact. Learning how to balance a hammer, pliers and yourself all at the same time. Learning how to build a fence. And, that looks are deceiving.



Elton Hunter, 2011

Trips

2008 Juarez Clothing Trip

On Thursday, April 3, 2008 2:14 PM, Elton Hunter wrote:

Hi.

We left Tuesday, and usually, we go down, stay one night on the road, and then head back home. There is not anything in El Paso we want to see. But I kinda needed a break. Had not had a Sunday off since Christmas. We usually stay @ the Motel 6 in Santa Rosa. But our banker gave us \$100 for personal expenses. Thus we drove past Santa Rosa to Vaughn. There is a neat diner, Penny's Diner, built in the style of the 1950's, shape of a train diner car. They have good food at reasonable prices, the décor is of the 50's and 60's, and the background music is from that same era. We stayed at the motel there, Oak Tree Inn. It was a little more than Motel 6 but we did get 2 full meals. I asked what people worked there to have several motels and cafes. It is a railroad town. The rails go from there to El Paso. My guess is that the railroad owns the motel and café.

The next day we unloaded at Pastor Danny's home. He had taken that day off from work to be there for us, but a funeral took precedence. It must have been a newsworthy death since it was televised. We went back to Danny's after he got off work and had supper with them. They asked about Dallas. Danny and Esperanza took us over to Juarez to visit the church. They had been given floor tile, a beautiful green, and the men in the church did a fantastic job of putting it down. Danny had gotten some red theater style chairs somewhere and had just finished installing them. The inside of the building really looks good. I am impressed with the church. I had considered them to be a mission church, but they have taken on as a mission another small church in the really poor part of town. Danny's church was in the poor part of town when we first saw it, but now the town has grown out to them.

I had planned to go from there to Stockton. But we were only 4 hours from Mavis. We had planned on going there sometime this year anyhow. We stayed with them Saturday night and left early Sunday morning. We got to see Tim and Jolene, and Doug, and also, Rachel and her husband.

Love,
Dad



Elton and Lola Hunter, kitchen at the farm, 2005

2013

Farm Auction

From The Farm Email Jan. 9, 2013

-- Original Message --

From: Elton Hunter

Sent: Wednesday, January 09, 2013

A letter to you kids. Life does bring changes to our lifestyle, either desired or undesired. Changes will happen. We can either welcome change or seek to avoid it, but it will happen in spite of our resistance to change.

Thus, I am brought to the farm. I have always enjoyed the farm. Well, perhaps not all aspects of farming, but there was more-good to offset the not-so-good. I was convinced that this place was the best of all. I took a work aptitude test in high school. There were 3 suggestions. I could be a farmer, a preacher, and I do not remember the third suggestion. Since farming was one option, I rejected all the other options.

But I have decided to sell the farm. I have a peace about the decision. The auctioneer was out yesterday for a tour of the farm and the house. He said that it was very marketable. When he seen the view from the bluff above the creek, he said. "What a view." If we are going to sell it, I see no reason to dilly dally.

You kids need to be thinking the things you want to have.

Love,

Dad

Farm Memories Jan. 11 Email

Elton Hunter
Jan 11, 2013

Woke up this morning at 3:00. Not as some country song would say of some girl on my mind. No, I woke up with the farm on my mind. I plan to continue taking care of the Mt. Vernon cemetery at least one more year. But in my mind, it is the Hunter/Burton cemetery. Through our historical search, I know those folks, their virtues and their foibles'.

After the place is sold, I doubt that I will drive by here on my way to the cemetery. I doubt if I will even be here for the sale. I and Spunky will probably walk the park area west of town. I have spent my entire farm life improving the farm. There has been a deep gully up on the northwest corner. I have tried filling it with trees, tires, stones, etc. hoping they would catch the dirt from the Axelson place but it was to no avail. Two years ago, I had a terrace line run to divert the runoff water directly into the crick. I then got a county guy with a blade to do a lot of the terrace building. I then spent hours with my tractor and loader to haul dirt from the backslope over to the gully. It is now pretty well filled up, and with the terrace to divert the water away from the gully, it can begin to heal. I have improved the place about as much as I am able. Perhaps it is because there is no more challenge that the farm has lost some of its luster for me. Dave tried to do that and wanted to do that. I was young when I watched Dave take the horses and a kind of a scraper and make a pit at the base of the cottonwood tree to get water for the cattle. Shortly after that, the creek flooded and when it was over, the pit had been filled up until there was no trace of Dave's labors. He never tried to do it again. Dave tried to grow alfalfa on the south 40, but grasshoppers feasted on the newly planted alfalfa, he gave up on that idea. Dave spent many hours and dollars to build a hog pen on the north side of the crick. But there was no water there. He and I used a 9 inch posthole auger, I still have the auger, to drill a well 20 feet deep in the hog pen area. No water! We drilled a well with it east of the crick in the bottom of the draw over there. It was 20 feet to blue shale but no water.

When I was a youngster, nearly all of the place was under cultivation other than the pasture on the east side of the farm and the hill west of the house. That pasture would probably would have also been farmed also except for the need of grass for the horses and milk cows. The sidehill west of where the CRP ground was farmed. I built terraces on the upper level to hold water away from it. The sidehill was too steep to terrace but we farmed it anyway. The soil was too light to hold the oneway and it would go down the hill to the east instead of following the tractor. I suggested to Dave that the hill be planted to grass. And he did. The crop production had been very poor on that ground anyway. The sideside hill north of the alfalfa field you kids would remember, was also farmed. It was also too steep to terrace, and the soil was too poor to raise a decent crop, and a deep gully was forming in it. I suggested to Dave that that ground be put back into grass. Dave did that. A diversion terrace was built to carry the runoff away from what later became the alfalfa field. I built terraces on the west side of the place. We farmed the tops of the hills and put the sidehills back into grass. All of the south 40 was farmed except for southwest corner which was too rocky to grow even good grass. In fact, none of the ground that was put back into grass was ever good grass. The hillsides of the south 40 were eventually put back into grass, but it was never good grass. After all those land improvements, the only farm ground left was the crick bottom and the tops of the hills on the west side. And the crick and dry weather took most of the crops from that ground. I was able to get it into alfalfa, and that was the best thing I ever did. I think that the damage was already done to the place before Dave got it. Dave and I have gotten the farm back into some of its former state. I have improved the place about as much as I can. Grandad John was just farming like everyone else around him. I do not hold anything against him. He just was the product of his time.

The place is not the same without the overhanging rock. I do not know when it broke off and fell into the crick. I was up the crick one day and there it lay. I remember Mavis using the rock as a stage to give one of her many speeches. Max carved his initials into the side of that rock. It was the only place on the farm that Max had done that. Duane carved DDH, in many places, they have now eroded away.

The cottonwood at the spring is a mystery. I have pondered how and why it is there. Other than John's tree and Pete's trees, it would have been the only cottonwood on the farm at that time. Dwight

had the state forester to come out to see if it might be a state record tree. It is not a state record tree, but it did measure 93 feet tall. There is evidence of trails Grandad John built to haul the rock from the bluffs down to build a house, a barn, and a chicken house. I do not have any memory of the stone barn or stone chicken house. We have gotten the farm back into as much as we can to its pristine state. The cement floor in the shop is breaking up. I suspect roots from Pete's tree are causing the damage. There were two Pete's trees, one tree blew/fell over many years ago. I have a picture of Mavis standing on it in a pose of her powerful strength. John's tree died, I think, from too many lightning strikes. In its day, it was a beautiful shaped tree and tall enough to be visible from the hill on the Hulse place. We have made improvements to the house beyond what Grandad John and Dave were able to do.

Dad

Hunter Farm Sold



On April 6, 2013, the Hunter farm passed hands to the neighbor to the north. The land was sold at an auction where other items were sold. The south 40 was sold to neighbor Axelson about a year ago. The remaining land was kept until April 6. Pictured above is the spring on Ash Creek.

9/25/13 Email from Elton Hunter

Good morning children. Rise and shine! Give God the glory, glory!

Well, it is six months since we sold the farm and moved to town. Do I miss the farm? Yes! Could we have stayed longer on the farm? Yes, but how much longer, I do not know.

I go to school athletic events now. The museum is a godsend. They appreciate our carpentry skills. There is no pay, of course, but we get a sense of satisfaction of still being useful. We took a load of clothing to a mission in Garden City. But, it does not have the joy for me it once had. It may be time to let that ministry go.

I plan on this being last year to take care of the Mt. Vernon cemetery. I have done that for 14 years.

We had a delightful time with Vicki for her birthday. Vic had put in some time planning our time. We visited a cathedral at Pfeifer (pronounced Pifer) and at Victoria. We drove west of Pfeifer and could see the limestone outcropping that provided the stone for the cathedrals. To see those beautiful buildings out in the middle of nowhere is a testimony of faith and sacrifice. We visited the grave of the man who had the vision of bringing Angus beef cattle to America. The Victoria cemetery has many iron crosses made in the style of the old country. We then spent some time at a polka fest enjoying the music.



House picture from the Auction flyer

Elton Lee Hunter
(1933-2016)
Funeral

Rev. Elton Hunter Obituary (Funeral Home)

Rev. Elton "John" Lee Hunter a long time resident of Stockton, KS, age 82, went to be with his Lord on May 21, 2016. Elton was born to David and Celia "Dickey" (Burton) Hunter on November 13, 1933 in Rooks County, KS. He grew up on the family farm 6.5 miles west of Stockton on Old Highway 24. He started school at Webster through the 6th grade. He finished his education in Stockton, graduating from high school in 1951.

Elton joined his father farming, but also had jobs off the farm: garage mechanic, roustabout for oil man, mechanic at Ostmeyer, and the Rooks County Highway Department as a road maintainer. A certain gal caught his eye, and he married Lola Taylor on July 24, 1955 at Glen Elder, KS at the Methodist Church.

Elton and Lola raised 3 children on the farm until June 1976. Elton changed his job occupation to lay pastor and had been assigned to a 3 church parish located north of Smith Center, KS. He served the Reamsville, Thornburg, Womer United Methodist Churches while completing his theology studies with Perkins School of Theology. After completing these studies he was ordained a Deacon of the United Methodist Church on May 25, 1982. Following this there were 3 more moves: Republic and Webber; Attica; and Protection, KS United Methodist Churches. He retired from the ministry in 1999, returning to farming on the family farm.

In 2002, Elton returned to the ministry as part-time pastor for Rose Valley United Methodist Church. For the next 8 years, Elton and Lola spent their weekends at Rose Valley parsonage and during the week on the family farm outside of Stockton.

Around April 2013, Elton and Lola moved to Stockton after selling the farm.

Survivors include: his wife, Lola; children Diane Hiebert (Dallas) of Rozel, KS, Vicki Strausberg of Wichita, KS, and Dwight Hunter (Gina) of Chattanooga, TN; and grandchildren David Hunter, Amy Hiebert, Dani Hunter, and Duane Hiebert.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Duane and Max Hunter; and sister Mavis Rabourn.

Funeral Services will be held at 10:30 am on Wednesday, May 25, 2016 at the United Methodist Church in Stockton with burial following at the Mount Vernon Cemetery. Visitation will be from 2:00 – 8:00 pm on Tuesday at the Funeral Home. Family will receive friends from 5:00 – 8:00 pm. Memorials are suggested to Stockton United Methodist Church and may be sent in care of Plumer-Overlease Funeral Home, 723 N. 1st Street, Stockton, KS 67669.

Hays Daily News Obituary May 23, 2016

The Rev. Elton 'John' Lee Hunter

- Kim Campbell
- May 23, 2016

The Rev. Elton "John" Lee Hunter, 82, Stockton, died Saturday, May 21, 2016.



He was born Nov. 13, 1933, in Rooks County to David and Celia "Dickey" (Burton) Hunter. He was a 1951 graduate of Stockton High School.

He married Lola Taylor on July 24, 1955, in Glen Elder. He was a lay pastor and had been assigned to a three-church parish located north of Smith Center. He served the Reamsville, Thornburg, and Womer United Methodist Churches while completing his theology studies with Perkins School of Theology. After completing these studies he was ordained a Deacon of the United Methodist Church on May 25, 1982.

Survivors include his wife, of the home; a son, Dwight Hunter, Chattanooga, Tenn.; two daughters, Diane Hiebert, Rozel, and Vicki Strausberg, Round Rock, Texas; and four grandchildren. Services will be at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday at United Methodist Church, Stockton; burial in Mount Vernon Cemetery.

Visitation will be from 2 to 8 p.m. Tuesday with family receiving friends from 5 to 8 p.m. at Plumer-Overlease Funeral Home, Stockton.

Memorials are suggested to Stockton United Methodist Church in care of the funeral home.

Condolences can be sent to the family at www.plumeroverlease.com

Inside the Service Program, May 25, 2016

Rev. Elton Lee Hunter

BORN

November 13, 1933

Rooks County, Kansas

DIED

May 21, 2016

Hays, Kansas

FUNERAL SERVICE

United Methodist Church

Stockton, Kansas

Wednesday, May 25, 2016, at 10:30 AM

OFFICIANT

Pastor Les Ellis

MUSICAL SELECTIONS

Amazing Grace

The River

When the Saints Go Marching In

PALLBEARERS

David Hunter

Duane Hiebert

Dallas Hiebert

Leslie Cunningham

Justin Holloway

Terry Malek

INTERMENT

Mount Vernon Cemetery

Rooks County, Kansas

Family Message by Dwight Hunter

MEMORIALS

United Methodist Church

Dwight's Statements at Burial of Elton Hunter

May 30, 2016

This is that final visual moment before the body is lowered into the earth and becomes one with the land.

This cemetery has a special family connection.

Dad wanted this place to look its best – so much so that he toiled to load and unload equipment to be a groundskeeper here for many years. Dad's family was placed into the earth here. Dad's parents as well as his brothers and sister and his grandmother Dora. And his grandfather John Hunter who migrated from Missouri to this part of Kansas.

As we lower Dad to his final resting place, I can imagine the wind whistling through here as it keeps a constant lookout over our land of remembrance. This cemetery will forever be a continuous connection in our lives as a place where we remember our Dad, Grandpa, Husband, and friend.

*Written by Dwight D. Hunter
A Son's story. Going from farm kid to PK.
About love and values. And about a Dad.*

On May 21st, my Dad died.

This was not an easy blog post to write less than a month later, but this is Father's Day weekend. I wrote this post as a remembrance of this moment of my life.

My daughter brilliantly captured Dad in her eulogy for Dad's funeral – here is a snippet:

My grandfather was the most genuine, down-to-earth, and caring man in the universe, and even that is an understatement. Every moment spent with him, I was astounded by his kindness, his selflessness, and his passion. He never cared about anything halfway--when he loved something, he put his heart and soul into that love.

Indeed, Dad never did anything halfway, including sharing his love. I was blessed to be immersed in that world.

One day during the summer between my high school sophomore and junior years, Dad and I played a few sets of tennis on the courts next to Smith Center High School. Tennis was a good recreational sport and we loved competition and it was good father/son time. I tried to perfect my serve with a slow, curving first serve bounce. He was always patient as I had more cord serves than actual good ones. On this particular day, after packing up our gear, Dad asked me a question out of the blue.

Was I ok with the move to Smith Center?

I was a little taken back – I had already completed two years of high school at SC. But he knew the move was a shock to the ordinary. My 16-year old reply was that the move was the best thing that ever happened to me. And today, I'm a proud alum of Smith Center High.

But back to that move that shocked the ordinary.

Before Smith Center, Dad had lived his entire life on a farm that his grandfather purchased. It was in a remote location and was not close to anyone or anyplace. My family lived in that same house; **a house that my great-grandfather built from quarried limestone.**

After I was born, Dad rededicated his life to God and church. He increasingly moved onward to church leadership positions. He had a call to the ministry. But he was full of self-doubt. His disability gave him this doubt. His speech impediment stopped him. But a miracle happened from the pulpit – from the pulpit he could speak with the power of

love, or during a funeral with the power to overcome grief, preaching from the heart because he was all in with the passion of love. What a witness he was for miracles.

When I was 14, Dad and our family left the farm behind. I became a PK. Our lives changed. A move that shocked the ordinary.

My son posted a moving FB post on May 21 about Dad. Here is a snippet:

The world has lost a great man. He was strong and kind hearted. He helped me build strength and character, and helped shape what I hold to be my personal values that have shaped who I have become as a person.

Values – I could write a lot about the values learned from Dad. I delivered a short eulogy about one of those values at Dad's graveside service.

After his funeral at the local church, the funeral procession drove several miles out of town to a country cemetery. A cemetery surrounded by nothing but miles of open land in any direction. I've never been comfortable being around caskets. But standing less than two feet from Dad's casket, I spoke about the value of family and what it meant to Dad.

Dad supported, led, and organized annual family reunions for many years on both sides of my family. He enjoyed going to family outings and celebrating holidays with family. And after his retirement from the ministry, he spent 15 years as a caretaker for that country cemetery – a cemetery where his parents were buried, and his brothers, and his sister and her husband, and his grandmother and grandfather, and uncles, and many more. I talked about the connection of that cemetery and how it will be a part of our lives forever: a connection to Dad and to family.

I miss Dad. I can't call him on the phone just to talk about life. That's difficult for anyone who has lost a loved one.

I will end this post from a dream I had. There was a song made popular by Ronnie Milsap in the 70s. The song was played at a lot of weddings because of love. Well, funerals are about love too.

As I envisioned Dad meeting his Lord on that Saturday, these words from that song were rolling in my dream:

What a difference you've made in my life
What a difference you've made in my life
You're my sunshine day and night
Oh, what a difference you've made – in my life.



Dwight Hunter and Elton Hunter, 1985, at the Republic UMC parsonage

*Random
Writings/Thoughts
from
Dwight Hunter*

Hunter House...Memories of what was

May 22, 2017





Limestone House

Told second-hand
that to quarry limestone
you had to have an ear for Music;
to hear the right tone, the right note,
as the line snapped across the rock
It was that right musical note
that determined how the limestone
would be stripped
from its resting place
and made into rows of limestone
building blocks
I never appreciated the mental work,
the preparation,
to build a limestone house, until now.
It never dawned on me that skilled training
was needed to harvest limestone blocks,
to build a solid support wall
that was cut for corners
I lived in a limestone house.
Over the years, the house was added on
with wooden 2x4s and Masonite
with an attic and metal roof
leaving three short linear sections
of limestone blocks as support walls
covered with paneling
but still noticeably thick in width
All of that is gone now.
Buried and bulldozed to oblivion.
Along with the memories of who we were
that we were there
a linear memory of
love, life, hope, and perseverance.
I used to live in a limestone house.

Dwight Hunter
May 2017

Old US 24

September 8, 2020

By Dwight Hunter

Dad once wrote that he would bet that the Ash Creek valley was a beautiful valley before being plowed opened up for the road.

US 24 was originally called US 40-N for 10 years (1926-1936). The 40-N highway in Rooks County was routed past the Hunter farm dividing 40 acres from the 120 acres where the house was located. The highway brought a lot traffic past the Hunter home. I remember Aunt Mavis telling me stories of people stopping by the Hunter home asking for different things (food, gas, directions).

When US 40 was constructed in Kansas, it split at Manhattan into US 40-N and US 40-S. US 24 originally was just a highway from Pontiac, MI to Kansas City. US 40-N was renamed to US 24 and US 24 connected Kansas City to Lawrence, Lawrence to Manhattan, Manhattan to Cawker City, Cawker City to Hill City, and Hill City to Colorado.

For the highway to cross the Hunter land, Ash Creek and its floodplain had to be conquered. A long bridge was constructed for US 40-N to cross Ash Creek. Then the roadway for US 40-N/24 was kept elevated as it approached the Hunter house driveway. Dad sent me an email once about the roadway consequences. He wrote that:

The road was the beginning of the ruination of the farm. Grandma Dora told Mavis that in the old days, there was only a low water crossing and that the crick, when it flooded, would spread out across the bottom. Grandma Dora said that there was a row of cottonwood trees from the house across to the other side of the crick. Highway 24 hurt the farm as the flood water could no longer spread out.

Sometime around the early 1950s, timing with the Webster Lake construction, a new US 24 highway in Rooks County was built to bend southward towards Webster Lake a few miles west of Stockton. This bend southward orphaned Old US 24 through western Rooks County and a couple of miles into Graham County. I'm going to guess this new US 24 route was built because of Webster Lake and the recreation/camping/fishing opportunities. There was an over pass built to connect US 24 traffic to the Webster dam. The result of the new US 24 route involved fewer hills as the highway ran more along the plat of the South Solomon River making it easier to tow a boat or a camper. Several miles of the orphaned US 24 became known locally as Old US 24.

Old US 24 was a series of up and down steep hills through the first three miles of its abandonment from new US 24 and not too inviting for towing a boat. In later years, the county decided to replace the Ash Creek bridge with a culvert, and to tear up the asphalt and replace it with rock. What was called old US 24 was no longer a paved road.

Dad told me there were options for where to build the lake. One of the options would have involved the confluence of Ash Creek and the Solomon South Fork. This option would have made a lot of the Ash Creek channel as a lake floodplain. That would have affected the farm. Instead, the decision was made to bury the town of Webster under water.

One year when I was in 6th or 7th grade, Webster Lake was so dry that one could see across the lake bed the foundations of homes and stores and where streets intersected. It was a shocking sight to understand that a town was once there. I wandered down old streets of Webster looking at limestone porch steps and stoops. I walked alone as Dad stood on the shoreline. I wonder now if I had wandered down an old Webster street that Dad had walked when he was the same age as I was.

My Last Year Livin' on the Hunter Farm – July 1975 to June 1976

November 13, 2019

Written by Dwight Hunter

Quote from this article in case you did not read all the way to the end:

Dad and I rode in our old, old farmer wheat truck – it was loaded down with furniture and more, as we left the driveway from the Hunter farm house, a moment of reflection – all of the Hunters that had lived there, John Earl, Dora, Dave and Dickie, Max, Mavis, and Duane, and John Jr., Cassie, Pearl, Wesley and Orville, and of course Dad and us. We were leaving those memories behind; that life behind.”

My last 12 months being an everyday resident and livin' on the Hunter farm was – different, way different. I was by myself – a lot. Both of my sisters by this time were graduated from high school and starting their own journeys in life. Dad was in the midst of converting his career from a farmer to a minister. Mom and I would travel to the different churches he would preach at each Sunday. Occasionally, we would attend our church in town, but more often than not on any given Sunday, we were at the Mt. Pleasant church or the Baptist church.

I unexpectedly was given a gift of two Suffolk ewes. Having year-round sheep was a totally different operation. Continued feeding and watering and moving out old hay for new hay in the barn; plus, the birthing of lambs. All new versus just having summer stock for the fair each year to be sold before school began.

So in July 1975, I remember checking on the farm crops and my sheep by myself. Dad was away at St. Paul's school of theology. On his last weekend in KC, Mom and I boarded a Continental Trailways bus at the McCune Café bus stop in Stockton. Dad had

the family car in KC, and we parked our old pickup truck by the courthouse. My only recollection of the trip was looking out the window as we passed Grandma's house in Cawker and wondering what she was doing and what she would think that we passed by without stopping. The bus station in KC was a strange place to me – very busy, a lot of people milling around, much different than the isolation of the farm offered. The two highlights of the trip was the AME church service on the Sunday before we left and seeing a Royals baseball game and wondering if Freddie Patek was so short that short stop was his only possible position to play.

Back home at the farm, the end of summer turned us into a three-person farm – Dad, Mom, and me.

I was the only child still going to K-12 school. The first day was memorable – the school bus never came for me. Mom had to take me into school. After school, I tried to get on my old bus with Mr. Bedore but was told I was no longer a rider and that another school bus was picking me up. I don't know how many times, I had to run down to the bus in the mornings as the new driver conveniently forgot about me. And being the last person picked up, trying to find a seat. The same thing repeated on the way home, being dropped off way past the driveway to the house and having to hike back. So, yeah, 8th grade was not that great of a year as a bus rider.

Thankfully, Dad was creating a path for all of us to exit the farm.

On the farm, I had my sheep to take care of. And during the calving season, Dad moved the cows to the alfalfa field east of the house. Around 1 AM, it was my job to take the flashlight and walk around the 5 acres making sure there wasn't a new calf born. On the weekends, Dad and I made a lot of repairs to the fence and to the corral. We tore down a house a few pieces of boards at a time a few miles from the farm. We used the floor and ceiling joists, as well as wall 2X4s, as corral fencing. I learned how to drive the pickup truck in granny gear to help Dad feed the cattle out in the pasture.

Thankfully, I did get to participate in sports. Football and basketball. I never really enjoyed football practice in 6th and 7th grades. But in 8th grade, I was given the job of running the scout team as the third-string QB. During August and September recess time, two of my classmates made sure I continued practicing my route passing and teaching me how to drop a pass into the "window area." Basketball was my favorite sport but I only rode the bench. We had a very good team and with 12 players, the bottom three of us saw very few minutes of play. However, the basketball coach was my homeroom teacher and my Wednesday night Bible Study teacher.

After Bible Study, sometimes, I was the only one left of the students as I waited on Mom to arrive to pick me up. A year earlier, her lateness would have been no problem – I could have easily walked the half of a block from my 8th grade teacher's house to where my Aunt Kathy's house was and waited there for Mom, or my sister Vick could have picked me up. But alas, my life during the 1975-76 school year was very different. There were no Arbogast families in Stockton. Plus, cousin Billy had moved from Woodston to Cawker before 8th grade and was even further removed from seeing him. Billy and I would have been in 8th grade together at Stockton as the Woodston 6-8 school had merged with Stockton that year. Not having any cousins around in town/school made life much more isolated.

And it wasn't just relatives moved away from town. I recall mom and me leaving Webster's supermarket and her Aunt Violet turning her head to avoid seeing us. Mom was so disappointed saying aloud – she ignored us! I often wondered if that was the price to be paid for planning to leave Stockton – being ignored and isolated.

But one good thing out of that year – the renovation of the Hunter farm house was completed with Mom's new kitchen. She didn't get a chance to use it very long until mom and dad retired 22 years later.

In the spring we were using the new chute in the corral to load up cattle for the market. We ran out of wood to complete the chute

and had to use sheep wire panels to fill in the gap. In my haste to get out of the way inside the chute, my shoe caught the top hole of the panel, and I was flung-over upside down and slammed to the ground. Yep, a broken arm. I was in a cast from my wrist up to my mid-biceps. Man did the sheep chores get tougher to do. And school work trying to write with my right broken arm. And Dad had sent me to tractor driving school. Try shifting gears with only one hand – I think they let me pass the tractor driving exam just because I tried so hard and I had aced the written exam.

Also earlier that spring, Dad got the call. A church appointment was available to him. Did he want it? So, some of the lay leaders of the three churches came out to the farm and got to see Mom's new kitchen and our newish living room. Yes-three churches. All out in the country. It was like the best place for Dad to start – he would be preaching to farmers out in the country. They liked him and that was that – we were moving to Smith County, Kansas.

The packing of the house commenced. Decades of Hunters had lived in that house. Decisions had to be made of what to keep in the garage shop and Dave's house. I had to find a place for the sheep. I didn't even know what 4-H club I would be in or what county fair I would be participating in that summer. I had just begun Eager Beavers 4-H the year before as the Webster-based 4-W 4-H club had disbanded.

Finally, Moving Day had arrived. We were all there on moving day and the days that had preceded it. My sisters and I, Mom and Dad.

I didn't know it then, but I was going to a great high school that had just hired a new principal, a new superintendent, and a new athletic director – all of whom changed the curriculum and the expectations. We were bringing the sheep with us to live on a couple of acres of land adjacent to the church. My middle school science teacher and his wife, who four years prior was my 4th grade teacher, would be the new renters renting our farm house as a place of residence, but not as farmers.

And that's how it would be – a series of renters renting the

Hunter farm house for a couple of decades, many of whom I never met as I too after high school started my own life journey.

Dad and I rode in our old, old farmer wheat truck – it was loaded down with furniture and more, as we left the driveway from the Hunter farm house, a moment of reflection – all of the Hunters that had lived there, John Earl, Dora, Dave and Dickie, Max, Mavis, and Duane, and John Jr., Cassie, Pearl, Wesley and Orville, and of course Dad and us. We were leaving those memories behind; that life behind.

As we topped the hill east of the farm, heading out to another life, another home, turning the page to a new chapter – Dad and I both agreed: don't look back. And we didn't.