

HISTORY OF CAPTAIN'S CREEK COMMUNITY

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Edited by

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Sources of Information:

Johnson County Historical Museum

Olathe Library

Johnson County Courthouse

Edgerton and Eudora Historical Books

Acknowledgements:

Mrs. Beth More Henley

J.P and Krista Lefmann

Former Students and Teachers of the Pleasant Valle and Hopewell Schools

Community Members

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Pages 38 – 45 contain school and community photographs and are not included in this work*

The History of the Captain's Creek Community is dedicated to the founding fathers who came to this area between 1850 and 1870. They came to America to establish better lives for themselves and future generations.

These founding fathers were all farmers with large families who attended Captain's Creek Church and whose children attend either Pleasant Valley or Hopewell Schools. Also involved were the Adams family (members of the Shawnee Indian Tribe) who sold land to the settlers. This story unfolds with the aid of records and memories of descendants, students, teachers and other community members.

LOCATION

The Captain's Creek Community was named after the creek that wound through it. This area is nine miles southwest of Olathe, six to seven miles southeast of Eudora or northwest of Gardner and Edgerton.

FOUNDING FATHERS

Some of the early settlers of the Captain's Creek Community were the Knabe's, Brecheisen's, Kanzig's, Finley's and my great-grandparents, the Lefmann's. These families came to the area between 1850 and 1870.

Justin and Christina Knabe came to the area around 1861 from Germany. They lived west of Captain's Creek on 143rd or east of the Johnson-Douglas County line. Richard and Linda Knabe at this time, live on this farm.

Justin and Christina had five children, Christian, Mary, George, Henry and Ed. After Justin died, Christina married Joseph Miller. They had six children, Julia, Lizzie, Albert, Louis, John and Emma.

When Quantrill came through the area on his way to raid Lawrence, Justin hid in a well so Quantrill would not find him.

Knabe and Miller descendants still live in the area.

The Peter Brecheisen family came to this area around 1857. His son, also named Peter, owned land near 151st and the Johnson-Douglas County line. Some of the younger Peter's children were: Samuel, Lizzie, Mary, Anna, Sophia, Oscar, Jesse, Sarah, Lena, Martha, Esther, Elsie, and Walter. His daughters Anna, Sophia and Esther taught at the Pleasant Valley School. Sophia, Lena and Esther also taught at Hopewell.

Walter's son, Wesley and his wife, Ramona live on land north east of 151st. The Captain's Creek Methodist Church was built on their land and in 1988 was moved closer to their house.

The younger Peter's daughter, Sarah, wrote a story about the Brecheisen's coming to Kansas. She gave a copy of the following story to my parents.

“A TRUE STORY OF PIONEER DAYS”

At the age of six years, my father, named Peter Brecheisen, in the year 1857, left Chicago with his parents to come to Kansas to make their future home.

They loaded their meager belongings on a boat, sailed different streams, finally reached Westport where they had to unload onto another boat, they proceeded until they came to Fort Leavenworth. Here the father bought a team of oxen and a wagon, loaded things in the wagon and started to find a location to stake their claim.

They landed 7 miles south and 2 miles east of Eudora, Kansas. Here the family of 6 started a home, which still belongs to Philip Brecheisen, a grandson of our Grandfather Brecheisen.

Many hardships were endured. The drought of 1860, when there was no rain for 16 months, being one of the hardest times. Then the guerilla warfare between the free and slavery parties during the territorial period of the state.

My father only fourteen year old, entered the Militia, in his father's place, he being ill, and helped drive General Price with his proslavery forces out of the state, back into Missouri.

Grandfather Brecheisen and my father, were on their way to Lawrence to sell their garden products and homemade cheese the day Quantrill and his men came into Lawrence. They left home in a covered wagon, drawn by horses on August 22, 1863. The day before the raid on Lawrence, August 23. They reached Eudora in the afternoon, and being detained there longer than expected, decided to stop there for the night. They started on for Lawrence early the next morning. About 4:30, they were awakened by clattering of hoofs and men talking. They heard one man say- "Here would be a good chance to swap horses, my horse is about worn out." Another man replied- "We better go on and not make any disturbances here, we are not there yet." Then one other remark was, "I have a big notion to shoot right through the middle of that wagon, Pete." No firing was done and Quantrill's men soon left to be on their way to Lawrence.

At day break, they hitched up their horses and started toward Lawrence. Soon they met a man on horseback riding toward them shouting, "The Bushwackers are in Lawrence, don't go any farther." Soon there came another rider. They asked him what he knew about the affair and he said, "Yes, Lawrence is gone to the dogs this time."

They found out he was one of Quantrill's men, who had deserted them after reaching Lawrence and was on his way back to Missouri.

Grandfather and my father turned and went back toward home. At Keystone, 3 miles south of Eudora, they helped carry a man named Mr. Stone, into the house, he being an anti-slavery man was killed by Quantrill and his gang.

After they reached home, they took everything they had and all hid out in the middle of a cornfield for the night and all the next day Grandfather Brecheisen, the following day went up to Lawrence and helped with the burying of the dead 125 persons, who were killed during the terrible massacre called "Quantrill's Raid".

Another event of great interest to them was the caravan of covered wagons following the Santa Fe Trail across Kansas from Westport or Independence to Santa Fe. Very often they would stop for the night just about 5 miles south of their home. Father told about going out to where they were bartering with the drivers. Many of them were Mexicans or Indians.

Grandfather was among the first group of people near Clearfield, Kansas to build a schoolhouse for the children to go to, so they would get an education which was reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic and geography. The teachers were scarce and the children had a long way to go to get to the school house. The school houses were for church purposes also till they could build churches.

For food and meat, they depended much on wild game, such as rabbits, wild geese, ducks and prairie chicken which were very plentiful and many wild deer were often seen. A bob-tailed lynx and 5 young ones were killed within a half mile of their house. Snakes were plentiful on the prairie. They killed one, a rattlesnake that had 18 rattles. It certainly was a big snake. They raised vegetables and corn and made their cheese and butter. Wheat was not grown at first for the soil was too rich. Cornbread was the staff of life in the early days. Now Kansas is a wheat growing state.

For amusement they hunted, fished, had singing schools, old fashioned spelling bees and visited with the few white neighbors and many Indian children who lived near them.

Such was life in Kansas, 100 years ago. How different from now, I wonder, would be willing to endure even one-tenth as much as our forefathers did?

- Written by Sarah Brecheisen, R. R 2, Eudora, Kansas

Another German family who settled in the area were the Jacob Kanzig's. Their land was also on 143rd, across from the Knabe's. I believe there were four children Lydia, Alvena, Irwin and John, who attended Hopewell School. The daughters also taught there. John and wife, Bessie's children Greta, Wayne and Roxana attended Hopewell and Baldwin. Irwin and wife, Ann's son, Jimmy, also attended Hopewell School.

James and William Finley were born in Ireland and came to Kansas in 1856. James owned land north of 151st and Evening Star Road. I remember the old house had beautiful stained glass above the windows.

Descendents of James still living in the area are his grandson Cecil's wife Ruth and their daughter, Pamela. Cecil passed away in February, 1990. His son, Robert lives one-half mile east of 151st and Evening Star Road. Another son, Chuck lives father east.

William Finley owned land southwest of 159th and Evening Star Road. He received a homestead certificate of this 160 acre tract of land under the Homesteaders Act of May 20, 1862

His children: William, Jon, Elizabeth, Albert and Frank attended Pleasant Valley School. John married Mary Brecheisen and Albert married Lena Brecheisen. Frank remained single and lived on the homeplace until his death.

Presently, Byron, son of Leonard and Evelyn lives on the homeplace. John was Leonard's father. John and Mary also had two daughters, Naomi and Ruth.

My great-grandparents, John Henry and Charlotte Lefmann, came to America from Germany around 1840. Before coming to Kansas by covered wagon in 1864 they lived in St Louis, Hermann, Jamestown and California, Missouri. In 1867, they purchased 160 acres of land north of 151st and Evening Star Road. They had five children: Louis, August, Henry, Louise, and Matilda. Possibly some of the younger ones attended Pleasant Valley School.

August married Mary Knabe and they had two boys, Ray and Clarence. The boys attended Pleasant Valley. Matilda married George Knabe Sr. Their daughter Lydia taught at the school. George Jr.s' daughter, Lois, attended the school.

Louis Lefmann's children also attended the same school. He had two daughters, Hulda and Ida by his first wife, Emilia Motzkus. After Emilia died he married my grandmother, Lena Scheurer who was from Switzerland. They had five sons: Jake, Phillip, Edwin, Gus and Henry. Jake married Jessie Wade and lived in the community. Their daughter, Hazel attended Pleasant Valley until they moved to Lawrence. My father, Phillip, married Mabel Gentsch and lived on part of the original Lefmann land. My brother, J. P., myself, and my sister, Jean attended the old school. My younger brother, Gerald attended Baldwin since Pleasant Valley closed and consolidated with Baldwin school.

Copied from my Grandfather, Louis Lefmann's record book:

May 13, 1907 - Bought Pilla Telephone – paid \$13.90
May 15, 1907 - Bought stock in telephone co. – paid \$15.00
March 7, 1908 - Paid 6 month dues \$1.20 to W. Andrew
Jan. 9, 1911 - \$2.40 for 1910 switchboard dues to H. M. Rogers
One horse show 75¢
Paid Dr. bill \$31.15
Paid to T. Gabriel \$5.00 for preacher
June 20, 1908 - Paid for Sunday School 40¢. For preacher \$10.00
Creamseparator \$60.00
Pd. Threshing bills to Breithaupt, W. Schulz
Bought 40# lard from E. Knabe for \$3.70
Wagon \$72.00 bought from Grange Store
4-28-09 - Twine binder \$61.00
3-12-1910 - Riding plow \$37.00
13 bu. wheat at 90¢ for \$11.70
Cornplanter \$37.50
200# flour for \$5.50
crackers 10¢ oysters 10¢ 1 doz. bananas 10¢
Aug. 13, 1910 - Sold 1 cow @ \$33 1 cow @ \$20 Bought 2 hogs \$25.65
Bought 1 cow \$49 and 1 mule for \$155
Sold 1 mule \$51 and 2 hogs \$25.85

Written by my Grandmother, Lena Lefmann:

Dec. 21, 1912 - Oil stove \$11
Shoes for Gus \$1.50 Shoes for Edd \$2.35
Overshoes \$1.95
Gus shirting 60¢
Edd shirting 60¢
Henry shirting 50¢ overcoat 2.25 overalls \$1
Shirts 50¢ suit \$4
Phillip overshoes 98¢ socks 30¢

Written by my father, Phillip Lefmann:

For bloating in cows, use one cup kerosene and 2 cup sweet milk well mixed in a drench.

-Bought blood medicine for horses.

For chicken cholera – Take equal parts of Tincture of opium, Tinct. Red pepper, Tinct. Rhubarb, peppermint and camphor mixed well and shaken before using. Dose given – a tablespoonful in water or food.

LEFMANN LAND HISTORY

In 1867, my great grandparents bought 160 acres of land from William and Margaret Bathurst of r\$600.00. According to the Abstract of Title, page 436, and Act of Congress approved on March 3, 1855, Bounty Land to be granted to certain officers and soldier engaged in Military Service of the United States. This land was deposited in the General Land Office Warrant 74320 for 160 acres in favor of a William W. Yaudell, Private of Captain Goodalls Company, California Volunteers, Rogers River War.

In turn, William Yaudell assigned this land located at SW ¼, Section 1, Township 14, Range 21, East of 6th PM in Johnson County to Mr. Bathurst, around 1860. then Mr. Bathurst sold this land to my great-grandparents, John Henry and Charlotte Lefmann in 1867.

In 1905, the 160 acres was divided into two, 80 acre plots. For one dollar, my Grandfather Louis received the South ½ of the South West Quarter of Section One, Township 14, Range 21 in Johnson County. His brother, August received for one dollar the North ½, which was also, 80 acres.

When August and his wife, Mary moved into Eudora, their son, Rany famred theland and received it as his own. In 1966, Ray and wife, Ella sold the land to Harold Hueser when they moved into Gardner.

My father, Phillip took over farming when his father, Louis died in 1912. Then after Louis' wife, Lena died in 1946, Phillip bought the farm from his brothers and step sister, Hulda. Phillip and wife, Mabel continued to farm with J. P.'s help until they sold it and moved into Gardner in 1971. They land was divided into four, 20 acre tracts and was bought by the Wallaces, Kanes, Smiths and my sister and husband, Dan Foley. The Foley land now belongs to new owners.

This research also uncovered other interesting history about some timberland owned by the Adams, the Shawnee Indian Family, and bought by the Lefmann's.

According to Abstract Title records, there were provisions of the second and ninth Articles of the Treaty dated May 10. 1854, between the Commissioners on the part of the United States and delegates of the United Tribe of Shawnee Indians, that certain members of the said Tribe become entitled out of the lands ceded by said Treaty. "If a single person, to 200 acres and if the head of a family, a quantity equal to two hundred acres for each member of his or her family." John Adams, a member of the Shawnee Indian Tribe and head of a family, consisting of Susanna, Alpheus, and Joseph, was selected for 160 acres of land. There was a stipulation prescribed by the Secretary of Interior, under the Act of Congress, arch 3, 1859, that the "said tracts shall never be sold or conveyed by the Grantor or his heirs without consent of the Secretary of Interior."

Therefore, when my great-grandparents bought some timber land along Captain's Creek and west of Evening Star Road from the Adam's heirs, a United States Indian Agent was involved. Great-Grandfather paid \$190.00 for 12 plus acres. Later, he deeded it to their sons respectively, Ray and Phillip. This land possibly was later bought by Wesley Brecheisen.

Some of the Adams family members died during a smallpox epidemic. At that time, the James Finley family lived on the land adjoining the timber land. They gave permission for the Adams family to bury their dead on the Finley land.

John Finley, a nephew of James took over the land from him, but my Uncle Jake lived in the house and farmed the land. My father farmed it after Jake moved in the 1920's.

Jake's son, Harold remembered his father unearthing a human thigh bone when he dug a posthole. Also, Harold and I remember stepping on a gravestone in front of a granary door. Joseph Adams name was on it. Other stones were behind this granary.

In the 1970's, John's son, Leonard uncovered the remains of a rock wall that supposedly surrounded the Indian burial grounds. Leonard built a pipe fence around this area and placed the remaining gravestones in it. He remembers seeing Joseph Adams name on a stone.

Harold remembers his Great Aunt Mary Lefmann telling that her parents has a molasses barrel on their front porch. One day she saw an Indian pick up a stick, place it in the molasses to taste the sweet, sticky stuff.

The Old Rack Barn was a well known landmark in the Gardner-Edgerton area before it was torn down in 1983. It was located four miles west and two and three-fourths miles north of Gardner on the Edgerton Road where Mr. and Mrs. Carl McKelvey live. Mr. Sheldon Ayers, who once owned the one hundred sixty acres, had the barn built. The Ayres family immigrated to Geneseo, Illinois from England. The brothers J.C.F. and Sheldon H. later came to the Gardner-Edgerton area.

My special interest in the barn was because my great-grandfather, John Henry Lefmann, who was a stone mason, supposedly helped in building the barn. My search for information was rather late since my cousins, Ray Lefmann and George Knabe, junior were unable to remember and details. Next in early 1983, I visited Mrs. Naomi Lightfoot who shared some interesting information. Since that time she moved to Larned, Kansas to be near her son, Benjamin.

Mrs. Lightfoot told that when her grandfather, Sheldon Ayers bought the farm, there was a field of castor beans on it. He hand picked and sold the beans, which helped pay for the farm. Another of his adventures was being the first to introduce blue grass west of the Mississippi River. When Mr. Ayres worked for the Barteldi Seed Company in Lawrence, he planted seeds and fruit trees on test plots on his farm. He also had an orchard so he stored seeds and saplings in the Rock Barn after it was built.

Nelson Ayers, Mrs. Lightfoot's father was around seven years old when his father built the barn. She thought the barn was built in 1874. A rock with that date was placed some where in a barn wall. Then later Mr. McKelvey told me that this rock was found on a south wall when it was torn down in 1983.

The sandstone rocks that made up the walls were hauled by horses and wagon to the site from a rock quarry. This quarry was on Frank Finley's farm located one and on0half miles west of the Ayers farm. Mrs. Lightfoot's brother, Arthur Ayers thought this quarry was near Captain's Creek since he found a rocky area that looked like it has been excavated.

Mr. Sheldon Ayers probably had help dressing the rocks which meant cleaning and straightening them before they were piled one on top of the other to form the barn walls. The dust from the rocks settled down and filled the cracks between the rocks. Small openings were left for light to come into the barn.

Due to the elements, the barn began to deteriorate so it was unsafe for anyone to enter it. Many passers by were interested in exploring this famous landmark. It was after a windstorm damaged the roof of the barn in 1983 that Mr. and Mrs. McKelvey decided to have the building torn down. A stone mason from Eudora removed the seventy two dump truck loads of rock and hauled them to another site to be used in various ways.

Some of the rocks were used in a retaining wall of a Catholic Church in Lawrence while others were used in building a smaller rock barn.

It is said that there is very little information about the barn but some stories have been passed on as the following:

Church services were held in the barn. When it rained, the horses and buggies pulled in the barn and let the women step down onto a cement pad. Then, the men drove the horses and buggies farther back into the barn until services were over.

Some told that pieces of old army harness were found around the barn.

After Mr. Ayres died, his brother J.C.F. bought the farm in the 1890's. Then George Knabe, senior bought it for his son George, junior in the 1920's. George and wife, Clara lived on the farm until they sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Carl McKelvey and moved into Gardner in September of 1966.

Mrs. Lightfoot and Mr. Arthur Ayers' mother, Grace Powell Ayers was my father, Phillip Lefmann's teacher at Pleasant Valley School.

PLEASANT VALLEY CEMETERY, EDGERTON, KANSAS

The Pleasant Valley Cemetery still remains although it is much smaller than it was originally. No fence was built to separate it from the surrounding farm ground. Each year the cemetery became smaller as the farmers plowed closer to the markers.

From Gardner, the cemetery is located four miles west, then two miles north and one mile west to 159th and Evening Star Road then back north one-half mile a little ways back on the east side of the road. The Pleasant Valley School and grounds were once between it and the road. The Rochell family provided this land for the cemetery which included their family members and neighbors.

The following is a list of people buried in the cemetery. Mrs. Elizabeth Hulse compiled the list which is recorded in the Johnson County Cemetery Book found in the Olathe Library.

Rochell, Elizabeth	died	11-13-1861
Rochell, James	died	3-13-1881
Moore, Ellen	died	11-17-1876
Wife of James Moore		
Moore, James	died	2-12-1861
Broom, John	died	10-21-1885
Son of G.P. and M.M. Broom		
_____, James	died	7-31-1869
Vance, Flora	died	8-17-1879
Daughter of J.W. and M.E. Vance		
Vance, Alberta	died	1-1-1874
Daughter of J.J. and M.E. Vance		
Vance, James	died	2-18-1872
Son of J.W. Vance		

Possibly there are others who were buried but no markers can be found. Mrs. Nellie Tunnison and I remember seeing the Knabe name on a marker that is not there now.

One year vandals, threw some of the markers into a grader ditch near the road. It was much appreciated that Dale Sawyer replaced the markers in the cemetery.

BETH MOORE HENLEY'S STORY

Mrs. Henley was County Superintendent when I was in grade school. The following is her excellent much appreciated story.

I've been asked by Joy to add to her history concerning the Rural Schools of Johnson County, Kansas. My comments pertaining to all Rural Schools, especially the Pleasant Valley District #13 in Johnson County where Jo's family attended.

The school was located after our country was surveyed, on the Evening Star Road between 151st and 159th Street northwest of Gardner.

A community is a group of people living together in an area, with the same interests which causes people to work together.

In the very early days of our country, the first buildings that were built were the church and the school, in each community. The country or Rural Schools were organized by interested patrons, their aim was to educate the children outside of the homes.

The land was usually given by one of the landowners for a location of the school, with provision that the acre would revert to the landowner, when it ceased to be used for a school. Some districts had deeds.

The acre was fenced on all four sides, frequently, there was hedge on two sides. The front two sides were fenced with set posts, with holes bored for an iron rail-beautifully, strung through the holes.

The school buildings were mainly built in the 1880's, some replaced the old dug outs or log structures, or were the first ones built, now over 100 years old.

Most of the buildings were rectangular structures, approximately 30 feet by 45 feet. They were mainly built of lumber. There were 3 or 4 windows on each side of the building. The floors were three inch boards laid, length wise. Across the front of the room was a platform about eight inches above the floor. The platform was used when programs were held. The school was a community center, often used for a church.

The front wall had sections of slate blackboards, with a chalk railing for chalk and erasers. On one end of the blackboard, was an American flag on a standard.

The school bells were interesting, some had cupolas with a big iron black bell mounted, with a long tail or rope hanging in the entrance. It was always rung at 8:30 A.M. and 9 A. M. Other schools used a brass bell. There was the tap bell on the teachers desk which was use to call the room to order.

The bracket coal oil lights were mounted on side of the windows.

Other buildings on the ground were the old privy house, with the half moons cut on the door. Some had a pretty good coal shed for the coal and cobs. In the early days, the teacher rode or drove a horse, so a lean to was built on the south side of the coal shed.

The water source was a cistern, located near the building or dug well with a pitcher pump or a huge iron pump, which usually had to be primed. The platform was heavy planks with a hinged door, later cement.

Some buildings had divided cloak rooms with hooks on the walls for wraps. In the entrance way, was a stand with a large bucket for drinking water. A long handled dipper was used to dip the water into the students individual tin or folding aluminum cup.

Some schools had built in book shelves or an oak cabinet. The shelves kept old books, discarded by the patrons, an old set (out of date) World Books or Book of Knowledge. Although they were old, it was interesting to look at the pictures.

On the front and side walls hung very large framed pictures of choice selections of 1. George Washington 2. Abe Lincoln 2.. Declaration of Independence 4. Whstler's Mother 5. The Gleaners *6. Carrie Nation *7. Francis Willard (*means depending on the community.)

Some schools had an old pump organ or an upright piano (usually out of tune). It sat at one end on the platform. The stools were fun, too, since the seat screwed up and down. Many a child was caught using the stool like a merry go round. Oh!

The desks were arranged in rows, smaller ones in front, to bigger ones in the back. They were composed of a flat table top, slightly slanted, which were on iron frames, screwed to the floor or on planks. The desks had a box under the top for supplies, books, etc. In the right upper corner of the units was the ink well. So when you reached the age to use ink for Writing, grades 1-6. to Penmanship, Grades 7-9. then the teacher filled the well with ink from the giant ink bottle.

The recitation bench, a long oak bench, which had space for 5-6 students at a time, stood, just off the platform, in front of the teachers desk and large Captains chair. The students came by grade to recite and see the examples on the blackboard.

The stove or heating unit was a pot bellied stove, with a steel jacket standing out about 15 inches from the stove to protect the students. The rooms were hot in the middle and cool in the corners. The other tools around the stove were a worn out coal bucket and a long handled shovel to remove ashes.

A large ten inch thick Webster's Dictionary on a stand was on the platform plus an out dated globe sat on the teachers desk. A few pull down maps were attached on the wall.

The play ground equipment was a short and long teeter board. Swings were built on a ridge pole, supported by braces, very sturdy. Some just used a big swing hung on a tree limb. It was great fun.

The games played were ruled by our own making, as a situation arose. Some cheating or fixing the rules was done. Games played: Blackman, Antiover, Catch, Hide and Seek, All kinds of Tag, Variety of Baseball, Red Rover, King of the Mountain. In the winter, the snow gave us a chance at sledding, making forts and throwing snowballs.

All games gave alot of exercise, although most of the students didn't need much extra exercise, since most walked one or two miles to school and back plus helped out with outside chores. The children were healthy, happy and kind. The students were all very obedient because their parents taught them to be.

Mothers were wonderful. They often brought birthday goodies and helped with the Box Supper Programs.

Many a father told the teacher, "if my children don't behave, just let me know."

TEACHERS

Mainly, the teachers were women, some young, some seemed ancient.

The qualifications were very limited, either you taught on a Normal Training Certificate. A course for that was given by some high school or you took the county exam, and secured a certificate for a shorter length of time. Very, very few teachers had any college when they first started teaching. Eighteen was the youngest age and life time for limit.

The teachers were widows, young girls or old maids. When a teacher got married, pregnancy was expected so the boards did not hire them for the next term. Yes, the teacher often had to reside in the neighborhood, guess so they could watch her conduct.

The teacher was educator, mother, nurse, judge and jury and enforced the verdict, janitor, disciplinarian, musician, social issues information, current affairs, and etc.

STUDENT EXPERIENCES 1912-1921

I entered the Green Springs rural district, often called Case School, at the age of 5+, the rule was 6 before January.

School was not new for me as my mother fixed cooked meals for my brother, Wilson and sister, Harriet and I carried them one-half mile, to them on ice days. As a treat, I got to eat with them and to visit for one-half hour each day before I started home.

There were nine grades then instead of eight, as the rural schools usually were eight months each year. A great deal of learning went on, as the younger children were helped by the upper grade children. Also much was learned from listening to the other classes.

The day was started by the teacher reading a passage from the Bible, then the students repeated the Lord's Prayer. Reading, Language, Writing, Arithmetic and Spelling were taught each year. Geography was added in the fourth grade, History started in the sixth grade, Advance History, Physiology began in the seventh, grades eight and nine included Civics and Agriculture. The three R's were taught on the grade level.

When we finished the eight and ninth grades, state tests were administered by two teachers, from several neighboring schools. The tests were sent to the county superintendent to be scored by a selected group of teachers.

The graduation for a group of schools was held at a general location, with music, speaker, minister and the county superintendent handing out diplomas. The boys and girls were decked out in their Sunday best. It was a great occasion, for many, it meant going onto high school at the nearest school.

I went onto the Olathe High School, where the Normal Training Course was offered. After four years, at age 18, I was the teacher in District #96 of Pleasant View.

Our teacher of Normal Training, Esther Ogg, had given us excellent training and I enjoyed the challenges. For the next 10 years I was a rural teacher in Johnson County.

School size varied from 10-32 students. One year at Prairie Center, I taught 32 pupils and all eight grades. This was the best year I taught, with good students, concerned parents. They all had respect for the teacher. The teacher was very close to the students, rapport was excellent.

Discipline was a small problem, for if you remember in the rural school, there were brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins all attending. Nothing happened at school that was not told at home, sometimes before you got home.

I was privileged to work with Rural School functioning and teaching. In November 1936, I was elected as County Superintendent of Johnson County, a wonderful job but I did not enjoy the politics. The salary was only \$133.00 pr month.

The duties of county superintendent were to supervise the rural schools, check certification of the teachers and the quality of their teaching. Decide and comprise on conflicts between board members and the teacher. To make recommendations on the school purchasing of supplies and library books. To keep the annual report from each district on record. To visit each teacher for report from each district on record. To visit each teacher for one-fourth day per year. I received two dollars per visit.

Changes I stressed:

1. That the teacher move on after 3-4 years, so students would have another opinion on subjects.
2. That the teacher enter and take advanced training in college. There were summer school courses at the teachers colleges. Keep growing.
3. When the school enrollment was down to 7 or less students, for the boards to arrange with neighboring districts to join and thus increase the enrollment, then they could hire a better qualified teacher at a better salary. This was the fore runner or consolidation which was completed in 1968.
4. Salary. Prepare and demand better salaries. The teachers salaries between 1930 and 1950 were very low, some taught in rural schools for \$50 to \$85 a month. Terrible! The teachers wee undercutting other teachers, bidding to do the job for less money. I encouraged all of the mo demand better salaries by no one teaching for less than \$75 a month. Some board members suggested that I was forming a teachers union, anyway salaries increased.
5. Recommended that the boards loosen up and provide better equipment, up dated maps, better library purchases of good books, paint and clean the old buildings. Select the best qualified teachers for the district's pupils.

After being county superintendent, I spent the next 8 years working in Federal and State government jobs. Then returned to teaching at Shawnee Mission in 1972 after 17 years of teaching Remedial Reading.

As a product of rural school education, as a student, a teacher and as county superintendent, I feel that I was privileged to have been part of the Rural School era.

I learned 3 major acts in school:

1. Think
2. Plan
3. Do – in this order.

A good way to tackle any project.

Rural School's pupils were very well versed in the subjects taught, however, we missed out on Music, Art, Culture or social living.

Pleasant Valley District #13, was a well organized unit, they had good teachers, good board members who cooperated and community spirit was high.

The families of the Charles Rowe, Phillip Lefmann, the Schulz, Rausch, Burton Clarks, Hamiltons and Finleys have succeeded in a very outstanding way, citizenship.

Two of the Johnson County Rural Schools building have been preserved, one, Lanesfield in south western Johnson County and The Walnut Grove School on Pflumm Road northeast of Olathe. This building was moved and renovated at the Walnut Grove, Olathe Elementery School grounds, to be used by students to get the feel of a Rural School.

- Written by Beth Moore Henley, May 1989

THE PLEASANT VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT #13

The Pleasant Valley School was located on one acre of land owned by John Rochelle, who was a patentee to this land from the United States. This land was located northwest of Gardner between 151st and 159th Streets on Evening Star Road.

Mr. Rochelle had given around 80 acres of land to his daughter, Perry Lee Moore. According to an old lease, dated June 23, 1878, from Mr. Rochelle to the School District #13, a provision was that the school district would yield possession of the property "to the said James Rochelle when said property ceases to be used for school purposes."

My parents, Phillip and Mabel Lefmann bought the other 70 acres from Mr. Rochelle's heirs in 1928 for \$1500. The deed stated that the described school tract was excepted from the conveyance (one acre off the SW corner of Section 12, Township 14, Range 21, commencing at the southwest corner of Section 12, then East 16 rods to a stake, thence South 10 rods to the beginning.) Therefore, my parents had no record title claim to the school property but paid taxes on it and mowed the school yard.

Although the school closed in April, 1947 the building was used for community activities. I can remember attending Bible School there in the summer. In 1955, the building and contents were sold. Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Brecheisen bought the building and tore it down.

In 1969, my husband Ernst and I bought the Rochelle property (known to us as the Moore Place) from my parents. In order to clear the title to the school ground, my father advertised in the paper for heirs to contact him, but none did.

My brother, J.P., continued to farm this land for us as he had for our parents. In 1976, we sold the 80 acres to the Guetterman Brothers, after being in the Lefmann family for 48 years.

There are many memories of the hard work my parents put into this land which included my brothers, sister and myself picking up corn left by the corn picker. We used the money to buy Christmas presents. The next year after Ernest and I bought the land, we had hedge bulldozed out and waterways built. Our girls Brenda, Karen and Lisa helped us pick up sticks and other debris so Ernst could seed it down to grass.

The year the Pleasant Valley School began is unknown but possibly before 1860 since Emery Ayers attended there in the late 1860's. According to what Mrs. Lelia Schulz Rausch was told by her grandfather, Levi Rice, the first school was a log cabin. Then between 1885 and 1890, a frame building was built.

In my search for information, I visited with Mrs. Lelia Schulz Rausch who was born August 9, 1892 and lives near Paola, Kansas. Her parents were Willie and Alice Rice Schulz. Even though she grew up and attended school in Prairie Venter, she often visited her grandparents, the Levi Rice's who lived south of the Pleasant Valley School. The Rice's homesteaded the land and built a log cabin east of 159th and Evening Star Road around 1857. Since the Rice's couldn't find water there they built another house on the corner where they found water and pumped it to the house. A windmill once stood over the well. It was Mrs. Rausch's Grandfather Rice who told her about the first school being a log cabin. He believed that the next school was built between 1885 and 1890.

At first there were not desks, just logs cut in two and set on peg legs screwed into the logs. Since there were very few textbooks, the blackboard was used to write lessons on.

Boys attended school mostly in the winter months since they had to help with the field work in the spring and fall. Therefore, some of the boys were in their late teens when they finally finished grade school. Also, there were male teachers since female teachers often could not handle the big boys.

Dorothy Denny Schulz heard that school was often dismissed when a wagon train came through. Ruts from a branch of the Oregon Trail once could be seen on the east side of the school.

Leonard Finley's, Aunt Lizzie told him that the school was also used for Sunday School and debates.

It was also interesting that Mrs. Rausch and her husband, Louis lived where Mrs. Ruth Finley resides near 159th and Edgerton Road from 1920-1947. Their five children: Lilah, LaVerla, Loris, Louis Ran and Lou Ella attended Pleasant Valley School at some time in their lives.

TEACHERS 1877-1947

The Johnson County Historical Museum in Shawnee, Kansas has records of Pleasant Valley School's teachers names, salaries and length of school terms as listed below:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TEACHERS</u>	<u>SALARY</u>
1877	Ella Maxwell	\$30 per month
1878	Jennie White	\$25 per month
1879	Lillie Sipes	\$25 per month
1880	John Types	\$30 per month
1880-1881	O. M. Rice	\$30 per month
1881	J. E. Payne	\$30 per month

TEACHERS (cont)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TEACHERS</u>	<u>SALARY</u>
1882	O. M. Rice	\$30-\$35 per month spring and fall
1883	Huldah Crawford	spring term
1883	Nat Ross	\$40 per month for fall and winter
1884	J. F. Prewkett	\$35 per month for fall and winter
1885	Kate Dwyer	spring term
1886	Ava Wolf	\$35 per month for fall and winter term
1886	Kate Dwyer	\$30 per month for spring term
1887	Maggie Williams	\$36 per month for 7 months
1888	Emma Francis	\$35 per month
1889	Nat Ross	\$42.50 for 7 months, resigned due to failing health. Pat Hertzog took over.
1890	S. F. Davidson	\$40 per month
1891-1892	S. F. Davidson	\$50
1892-1893	R. Harrington	\$35
1893	J. E. Gants	\$47.50
1894	Allie Ott	\$33
11895	J. R. Conn	\$45
1896-1897	Frank Redding	\$35
1898	Kate Rogers	\$30
1899	Mary Hill	\$45
1900	Wilma Watson	\$30
1901	F. L. Gilbert	\$35
1902	Cora Powelson	\$37.50
1903	Grace Powell	\$35
1904	Ella Gay	\$35
1905-06	Mary Fruman	\$40
1906-07	Pearl Tuller	\$40
1907-08	Hattie Osborne	\$40
1908-09	Carrie Reid	
1909-10	Anna Brecheisen	
1910-11	Lydia Knabe	
1911-14	Jessie Penner	
1914-16	Sophia Brecheisen	
1916-17	Anna Miller	
1917-18	Jessie Roberts	
1918-19	Esther Brecheisen	\$32
1919-20	Ina Dana	\$49 per month, taught 5 months.
Had 11 students but 10 moved so Dorothy Heitzman went to Toad Hollow		
1921-22	Mae Meeder	
1922-23	Esther Brecheisen	\$100 per month, 32 weeks
1923-24	1924-25	1925-26 not known
1926-27	Beatrice Roark	
1927-28	Anna Andrews	
1928-29	Harold Dent	
1929-30	Hazel McKaig Cave	
1930-33	Unknown	

Luckily I found two Daily Attendance Register books dating from 1909-1922 and from 1936-1941. These books contained dates, names of teachers, students names, grades and other notations made by teachers. The following information includes items of interest taken from these books along with remembrances of Pleasant Valley School Days by former teachers and students.

In 1910, the teacher was Anna Brecheisen. The school year was about twenty-eight weeks long. Classes began at 9 A.M. and ended at 4 P.M. Recesses were at 10:30 A.M. and 2:30 P.M. She had eighteen students, with the youngest being six years old. The oldest was Maude Lambert who was seventeen. At time of this writing Maude is 97 years old and living in a nursing home.) All but three students left school two weeks before it was closed in the spring due to an outbreak of scarlet fever. Therefore, none of the seventh and eighth grade students took their final exams. Miss Brecheisen noted that it would be well for these students to take the required studies order in order to take the final exams.

Among the still living older students are Maude Lambert Fesmire Priest, her sister, May Hammer and their brother Lee Lambert. Their other brother, John and sister, Belle Roberts are deceased. Their family lived on a farm north of the school.

Lee remembers that two of his teachers were Anna and Sophia Brecheisen. Walton Marley and the Close children were some of his classmates. He attended 8 or 9 years.

Maude Lambert remembers Walton Marley's mother bringing him to school in a buggy. She remembers that her last teacher, Anna Brecheisen, rode a horse to school. Miss Brecheisen died one summer while helping cut wheat with a binder. She fell off a horse and was run over by the binder.

Spelling was Maude's favorite subject. She carried her school lunch of jelly sandwiches, cold chicken or whatever was available packed in a syrup bucket.

Jack Donovan's family lived south of 159th and Edgerton Road. He was born in 1902 and attended school from 1910-1919. His sisters, Blanche and Iris, plus his brothers, Earl and Clarence, also attended school at Pleasant Valley. They rode horses to school and tied them near the coal shed. The Lambert's were also his classmates.

The students, then went to the cemetery east of the school and read the names on the tombstones. In the all, they would crack walnuts that fell from the trees northeast of the school.

Since there was no well on the schoolgrounds, some of the older students would carry buckets of water from the Close family well across the road. There was a dipper near the bucket of drinking water inside the school, to dip the water into individual cups.

At lunch time, the boys ate in the coal house. They carried their lunches in one-half gallon syrup buckets. Mostly they took sandwiches but Mr. Donovan remembers my Uncle Henry Lefmann bringing sliced, cooked sweet potatoes spread with butter.

Mr. Donovan also recalled that Uncle Henry and his brothers often spoke German so some of the students could not understand what they were talking about. The brothers spoke very little English until they entered school.

When the Donovan family moved from the district, they moved west of the Gardner Airport. He was over 18 years old when he began high school in Gardner. The Donovan boys farmed for the Josh Hedrick family since the Hedrick's sons, Bill and George, were in World War I.

July 25, 1925, Mr. Donovan married Flossie Reitz of the Four Corners Community northwest of Gardner. They bought the land west of Eldon Gordon's on 175th Street, where they farmed, raised pigs and milked. They had two sons, Ben and Dick. The Donovans now live in Gardner.

In 1911, the teacher, Lydia Knabe, wrote that my father, Phillip Lefmann, age 14, needed to study more at home. Then in November 1912, another teacher, Jessie Penner wrote that he quit school at age 16. Phillip's father died earlier that spring so he had to stay home to do the farming.

In 1914-1915, Sophia Brecheisen wrote that certain students must begin arithmetic on certain pages the following year. Her students read Evangeline and The Christmas Carol. Also, two students lost their grade cards.

Another teacher, Anna Miller in 1916 noted that the Vinland Fair was September 29 and Thanksgiving vacation was November 29 and 30.

In February, 1920, nine of the eleven students moved so the school was closed. The remaining two students attended Toad Hollow School which was four miles west of Gardner. Then in September 1921, Pleasant Valley reopened with eight students.

In 1922, the teacher, Mae Meeder noted that Hazel Lefmann, my cousin, did not attend school for five weeks due to an eye injury.

Weldon Epperson attended school for three years at Pleasant Valley before moving three-fourths of a mile away which put him in the Fourteen School District. Mr. Harold Dent was his third grade teacher. Baseball and football were Mr. Dent's favorite sports so he arranged for the boys to play games with the Prairie Center boys. One year they had a taffy pull at school with Loris Rausch losing a tooth when he bit into the taffy, Loris then took the piece of taffy and threw it against the school.

Another of Weldon's memories was of the old telephone party lines. He recalled that the only time the Finley's spoke German on the telephone was when their blackberries were ripe. This was to keep other neighbors who listened in from understanding the conversation.

Mr. Harold Dent's first teaching position was at Pleasant Valley, September 1928 – May 1929. He graduated from Gardner High School with a normal teaching background. Number 13 was his lucky number since he was hired on Friday the thirteenth at District # 13 and had thirteen students. The students were Lois Knabe, Weldon, Agnes and Kenneth Epperson, Bernice, Donald and Henry Filkins, Lila, LaVerla, and Loris Rausch and Kermit Klamm. He believed that Jasper Epperson, Henry Filkins and Louis Rausch were on the school board. In bad weather, he stayed with Ray and Ella Lefmann. A two door Model T Ford was his means of transportation. Often when driving over the muddy roads, he had to wire the right door to the steering wheel to keep it shut.

After teaching at Pleasant Valley, he taught at Lone Elm School which was located east of Gardner. Presently, he and his wife live in Prairie Village. (At the time of this writing he passed away June, 1990)

Hazel McKaig Cave, another Pleasant Valley teacher, stayed with the Filkin family while teaching. She now lives in Amarillo, Texas.

Lois Knabe Milligan remembered that some of their teachers were Eileen Fuller Dillon and Mary Louise Kindig. They stayed with her family during their school years. One year, all eight students were girls which was unusual. The Kansas City Star sent a photographer out to the school to take a photograph of them for the newspaper.

Geraldine Rowe Oshel has many fond memories of her school days. Mrs. Fuller, Mrs. Kindig and Miss Wilma Brown were some of her teachers. She remembered the bookcase library with a variety of books. Also the County Health Department made the school buy a ceramic water fountain with a spigot and covered with a lid. Each student was to have his/her own cup. Her mother's family, the Blakeman's once lived on the farm south of the school.

Since there was not bus transportation to Edgerton High School, Geraldine stayed with different people in Edgerton. One year, she stayed with Miss Faye Walton and her sister, Alma. Another year, she stayed with Mrs. Shea, who had a Boston Terrier named, Bingo. Geraldine graduated from high school and during World War II, married Warren Oshel who was from Edgerton.

Geraldine's brother, Forrest and sister, Marilyn attended Pleasant Valley also.

Mary Louise Carver Kindig taught at Pleasant Valley for two years, from 1934 – 1936. Her next teaching position was Hopewell from 1936 to 1937. Her salary was \$50 per month for an eight month term. She took a Normal Training Course, which consisted of seventeen summer classes to receive a lifetime teaching certificate. She also took the train from Olathe to Ottawa to take an English test at Ottawa University. To help out with expenses, she worked for the County Treasurer, Lloyd Squires, during the summer.

She taught all eight grades. Some of Mrs. Kindig's students at Pleasant Valley were: Lewis and Edward Barnes, Mercedes, Grace and Junior Huhman, Geraldine Rowe, LaVerne Doudna, Alfred Evinger, Louis Ray Rausch, Maxine and Marian Flikins and Lois Knabe. Members of the schoolboard were Charles Rowe, George Knabe and Albert Finley.

Mrs. Kindig stayed with the George Knabe family, who had a daughter, Lois, in school. Later Mrs. Kindig found out that most of the teachers usually stayed with the Filkins. She did not remember how much she paid for room and board. George drove her and Lois to school by car except on muddy and snowy days, when they went by horse and wagon.

She remembered being the school janitor, which meant keeping the school house clean and building fires.

The students competed in spelling and geography matches. At recess and noon time, the students played many games including baseball and last couple out.

During the school year, they had a money raising program for school supplies or other needs. The students spoke pieces, sang songs and put on plays (dialogues) for the community to see. Often her brother, Kenneth played his trumpet. Sometimes, they had a box supper in which the girls' fancy, food filled boxes were auctioned off to the highest bidder. Hot dogs, pie and coffee were also sold.

These were Dust Bowl Days. The wind would blow very hard, stirring up the dust and turning the sky pink. The dust bothered her bronchitis. Mrs. Kindig has the measles one year so she had to get a substitute teacher while she was ill.

One Saturday per year a Wolf Drive was held with the round-up in the field south of the school. The ladies of the community sold food to the participants and spectators of the event.

One winter, Geraldine Rowe's mother was sick when the snow was very deep. Dr. Reid from Gardner, managed to drive as far as the school, then walked around one and one-fourth miles to see her. Mrs. Rowe and LaVerne Doudna's mother died the same year. This was a difficult situation to handle.

Mrs. Kindig remembered a student, Junior Huhman, who choked on a pencil eraser. He started coughing and his face turned red. She shook him and pounded him on the back. Then, she sent his sister, Mercedes, home to get their mother. The family lived one-half mile south of the school. Mrs. Huhman brought a piece of bread for Junior to eat. He soon was all right.

In the spring, Mrs. Kindig took the students on a field trip across the road to some timber to pick flowers. The Knabe's found mushrooms in the area also.

From Pleasant Valley, Mrs. Kindig went to Hopewell School for one year, 1936-1937. Some of her students were: Lloyd, Hazel, Alice and Marie Brecheisen, Jimmy and Greta Kanzig, Doris, Gayle and Galen Gabriel, Arlene, Eugene and Maxine Westerhouse, Jean Stanley, Bob and Glen Miller. Members of the schoolboard were: Jesse Brecheisen, Irwin Kanzig and Roger Stanley.

Mrs. Kindig quit teaching, got married and had one son. Since then, she has been involved in many activities involving art work and tole painting.

Maxine Filkins McAnelly, as a Pleasant Valley student, remembers playing in the cemetery behind the school and picking violets. In the spring, her teacher took the students across the field to Captain's Creek for a picnic and they played with tadpoles in the water. She and her siblings walked to school. In the wintertime, she wore long underwear and long brown stockings. Several teachers boarded with her family. Maxine, her sister, Marian and I attended school together.

Their family moved away from the area in the 1940's and we did not keep in touch. One day while visiting with two of their aunts, I inquired about the girls. To my surprise, I discovered that Maxine and I had worked together at the Olathe Hospital in the mid 1970's. We were so busy performing our nursing duties that we did not find out about each others past.

Nellie Dunn Tunnison was my first grade teacher from September 1938 until April 1939. The students were Maxine and Marian Filkins, Louis Ray and Lou Ella Rausch, Forrest and Marilyn Rowe and myself. One day we threw wadded up paper into Louis Ray's lap so Miss Dunn told us to stop but I did not. Well, I threw one more paper wad and ended up standing in the corner for disobeying. Another time, the older students talked me into placing a thumb tack in Miss Dunn's chair. Someone told her that I was the guilty one, so back to the corner I went.

Marilyn Rowe Dugas remembered jumping out the window when Mill Dunn was out of the room. Another of her memories was of Dr. Reid and a County Health Nurse giving shots at the school.

Miss Dunn also taught at Hopewell and Forest Hill Schools. Her salary was \$75 - \$90 per month. While at Pleasant Valley she stayed with the Albert Finley's and the Filkins.

One of Miss Dunn's students at Hopewell sometimes had seizures at home so the family instructed her what to do in case he had one at school. Whenever the student would complain that he wasn't feeling well she would drive him home.

Helen Philips Oshel was my second grade teacher from 1939-1940. She remembered the stove lowing smoke out one wintry morning when she was attempting to start a fire. Her hair was singed. Another time she was terrified when a bull snake was found in the school yard.

The teachers kept a list of visitors in the Register Book. Some of the visitors were: Rev. H.J. Ahrens of Eudora, Kansas in January, 1910; my great uncle, August Peters of McGirk, Mrs. Ulysses Plank of Gardner and Emery Ayres of Bliss, Idaho on October 7, 1940. Mr. Ayres told stories of early days in this area.

Emma Jewett, my third and fourth grade teacher, taught from 1940 – 1942. She stayed with Ray and Ella Lefmann or with my family during the wintertime. Previously, she taught at The Deaf School in Olathe so she taught us sign language. For a field trip, she drove us to Lawrence where we boarded a train for Topeka to visit the State Capitol. My what a great day that was for we country school students!

When the Rausch and Filkin families moved, Forrest and Marilyn Rowe, J.P. and I were the only students still attending school. The low enrollment rate resulted in Pleasant Valley School closing from September, 1942 until September, 1944. During this time, we attended Hopewell School just one and one-half miles away. My sister, Jean started first grade the second year we attended. Mrs. Aera Crear was our teacher. Her husband worked at the Sunflower Ordinance Works. The Crear's had one son, Mark. The first year they had rooms with the Ed Knabe's (Richard Knabe's grandparents). The second year they moved a trailer house on the east side of the school house.

Some of the students were: Dale McKaig, Goldie Richardson, Wayne and Greta Kanzig, Janet Brecheisen, Merle Seiwald, Leta May and Sophie Bell Kurtz, Genevieve Miller, a Stockwell boy, Cherry and Honey Koch, a Beers girl, Darlene Bagby and Bobby Nance. Some of the students and their parents were living in apartments at different homes. This was during World War II so many families fixed up apartments for workers at the Sunflower Ordinance Works.

Attending Hopewell was quite a new experience for the Rowe's and my brother, sister, and myself, even though we knew many of our classmates from church and other activities.

The school and surrounding homes had electricity but our home did not have electricity until 1946. We took cheese sandwiches which we toasted in the school oven for lunch. There was more competition between students and more school activities but now field trips.

At Christmas, the students had a program for the parents. The school had a Santa Claus suit so Janet Brecheisen was Santa. She had black boots of her own that I imagined looked like Santa's.

One year, the school had a box and pie supper for a money making project. My Mother helped Marilyn and I decorate our boxes and fix the food to back in them. Marilyn borrowed one of my dresses for this exciting night. A young man bought my friend, Ruth's chocolate pie, then another man bought Marilyn's box and they began eating. All the time my heart was racing. When my box was auctioned off, I did not see who bought it. My father saw who bought it. The next thing I knew I saw my father walk out the door. Still I waited for someone to bring my box to me so we could eat the food. Soon my father came back in and said that he couldn't find out anything about my box. By now I was crying so people tried to comfort me with kind words and food. A few weeks later, Mrs. Ed Knabe brought me a beautifully braided rug, which made me feel a little better.

The Rowe's and we three Lefmann's usually walked the one and three-fourths miles to school on nice days. On rainy or snowy days my father took us by car. Some times we would catch a ride with the McKaig's or Richardon's from our north corner.

The big old bridge over Captain's Creek was always fascinating since we could look between the boards and see the creek flowing below. I can still see Marilyn Rowe and Mark Crear, scooting slowly across the top girders of the bridge. They were a lot braver than the rest of us. This old bridge was replaced by a new one in 1957.

There was timberground all along the west side of Evening Star Road to our homes. We crossed over one small cement bridge and two big culverts that spanned little streams that ran into the bigger Captain's Creek.

In the fall dark, purple wild grapes hung from vines in the trees. In the spring and fall colorful wild flowers bloomed along the road and in the timber. Since the road had very little to no gravel on it, our boots soon became caked with mud after a good rain. Bu the time we arrived home after school, we were weary. There were also deep ruts from the few cars that traveled our lonely road. Usually just the mail carrier and local people traveled it. When two cars met, one would have to back up to a safe place to let the other go by.

All of these memories were history by September of 1944 when Pleasant Valley School opened once more. Melvin and Louise Clark and Reta and Bob Hamilton had moved into the school district. Mrs. Mary Primm was the teacher. Her husband, Carl worked at the Sunflower Ordinance Works. They had three children, Carl Junior, Mary Eva and Elaine. Mrs. Primm took Louise, Marilyn and I home with her for a weekend. We went shopping in Ottawa on Saturday and went to a movie in Baldwin that night. This was a treat for us farm girls. Another time she took all the students to tour the Ottawa Creamery and a flour mill.

Mrs. Primm remembered moving my brother, J.P.'s desk closer to hers since he was always talking to the other students. She recalled that he always had a smile on his face and was friendly. My sister, Jean was the only one in the second grade so she completed it early in the year. Mrs. Primm decided with my parents consent to move Jean up to the third grade, Mrs. Primm has always wondered if she had done the right thing by doing so. Another of her memories was of the homemade bread my mother baked for the Primm family. After school, Mrs. Primm would let the students dust the erasers, clean the blackboards and carry in coal and cobs to start the fire in the wintertime.

Since the Hamilton's lived one mile east of the school, sometimes they walked across the field to school. Other times they walked around the road with the rest of us. All of us had relatives in the armed services so there was much bantering over which branch was the best.

Jean Lefmann Withrow's memories of her school years at Pleasant Valley were: Pleasant Valley was a small typical country one room school house located on a country road which wasn't traveled much. It had the usual black coal stove which we used to warm by or dry our clothes by if we got wet when we were playing outside. On one side of the big room was a row of smaller desks, then on the other side were two rows of bigger desks. There weren't too many going to school at that time. Only had from 5 to 10 kids but we always found something to do. We would play baseball, anteover, red rover, tag and other games. The only playground equipment was a teeter totter and some sort of merry go round. Sometimes we would wander through the small cemetery in back of the school and try to read the ol grave stones. The school year ended in April and sometimes the last day of school would be on my birthday.

I attended the second through the fifth grade there. Mrs. Primm was my second through fourth grad school teacher. She would bring a friend of hers from Wellsville who was blind to visit sometimes. She would play the piano and also read to us from a big Braille book.

Dorothy Schulz was my 5th grade teacher. That was the last year that school was held there, which was 1946-1947.

Melvin Clark had many of the same memories which included the big black stove that stood in the corner. Another memory was of Ms. Lena Finley visiting once a year and bringing popped corn. He remembered that the Finley's bought a new black Chevy but it didn't have any heater.

Memories of old cars reminded me of the Clark's Model T Ford truck. During the summer, Mr. Clark, Mr. Rowe and my Dad took turns taking we kids to various activities, one of which was Youth Fellowship at the Captain's Creek Methodist Church. The boys rode in the back and the girls rode in the front seat with Mr. Clark. He really liked to teas us. In the winter it was too cold to ride in the truck since it had no side curtains.

Mr. Rowe had a 1932 Chevy Coupe with a rumble seat. Marilyn, and I liked to ride in the rumble seat so we could talk "girls talk." My Dad had a two door 1935 black Chevy sedan. The heater didn't always work so we would wrap up in blankets to keep warm.

Dorothy Denny Schulz taught from 1945 – 1947, which were the last two years that Pleasant Valley was open. Her brothers, Dale and Dean came too. Bob West moved into the district and Forrest Rowe went by bus to Baldwin High School.

Miss Dorothy, as we called her, received an Emergency Teaching Certificate by passing a test at the Johnson County Courthouse. She went to the County Superintendent, Mabel Click, for a list of schools needing teachers. She applied at three schools and was hired at Larrick for \$76 a month. Then the next two years, she taught at Pleasant Valley followed by teaching school in Douglas County.

She remembered her aunt telling her that it was the teacher's responsibility to make school interesting for the students. That was jut was Miss Dorothy did. She took us on a field trip to Kansas City which will b explained later in J.P.'s story. The next year the students made Indian costumes from gunny sacks when they were studying about Indians. After lunch, she usually read a story from books that kept us spell bound.

Miss Dorothy worked with the youth at Captain's Creek Church and in Gardner. She and her husband, Russell have four children. The oldest is a teacher.

Marilyn, Louise and I graduated from grade school in April of 1946. We took a test in Edgerton at the old grade school with other eight graders from the surrounding areas. A teacher, Rachel Hoopes (now Rakestrow), and another teacher plus Miss Callahan, the high school principal, were there. We passed the test and attended graduation exercises in the old Edgerton High School Auditorium. That was an exciting night for us.

In the fall of 1946, Marilyn, Louise and I went by bus to Edgerton High School but the next year one part of the district decided to consolidate with Baldwin. Therefore, Marilyn and I went to Baldwin and Louise remained in Edgerton.

There were only five students the last year at Pleasant Valley the school doors closed for good in April of 1947 This was a sad day for the community, but schools closing and consolidating with the larger districts was beginning to be the trend of the area. There were more advantages and a broader range of classes for the students even though country schools and teachers couldn't be beat.

J. P. LEFMANN'S STORY

My brother, J.P. Lefmann told the following "bittersweet" story to his daughter, Krista. His wife is the former Gloria Gordon. They also have a son, Greg.

In one corner of my mind the old school house still stands. The old coal burning stove still burns. I remember being spoiled one year and being treated like an idiot, the next. The fun, the fear, everything. Here are some of my stories.

My first year of school was exciting. As we were walking to school one day, we heard a meowing noise from across the road. We didn't think much of it and went inside the school. At recess, we heard it again so at lunch, we investigated. We crossed the road to an acre lot where there was an old house, a well, brush, a hedgerow and a large old tree with a hole in it. Inside the hole, which was 6-7 feet off the ground, were four or five yellow, white and gray kittens. Their mother had been run over. We couldn't figure out how they got up there. Forrest Rowe climbed the tree and got them out. We decided to divide them up. I got two of them, but I believe all ended up dying.

Several exciting events happened in our outhouses. The first happened in the fall of my second year. Dad was on the school board so his job was to fix up the school for classes. During the summer, someone had knocked over all the outhouses. Jean and I were with Dad while he was cleaning up.

The two of us were sitting on one of the buildings, playing that it was an airplane. Jean and I were the pilots, bombing the Germans. This was during World War II. While we were playing, these giant black and yellow garden spiders started weaving webs around us. Being kids, we started thinking that they were trying to capture and trap us. We tried to think of ways to make a quick break for it. I can't remember how we got out but I guess we did.

The next event happened later on that year. During noon hour, I went to the outhouse. As I was standing there, I heard a hissing noise. I looked around and saw a four foot long black snake. I got out of there in a hurry and ran to the school house. When inside, I started telling everyone about it. Forrest, being several years older and our class hero, went out there, picked up the snake by the tail and popped its head off.

Mrs. Primm, my fifth grade teacher and her 1937 Ford two seater, supplied a morning of excitement at our old school house. Mrs. Primm lived in Baldwin and drove to Pleasant Valley every day for school. One day, she was topping a hill when she hit a bull. You're probably wondering where the bull came from. Well, Ted Moody and Frank Finley were moving cattle across the road. As, she topped the hill, the bull crossed in front of her car and she hit him. The bull ran off but it left a large dent in the car's fender.

The younger generations might think that we never went on school field trips. I remember one field trip very clearly. When I was a sixth grader, our teacher, Miss Dorothy Denny, took us by Continental bus, from the Olathe Naval Base to Kansas City, Missouri.

At that time the students were my sisters, Joy and Jean, Louise and Melvin Clark, Bob and Reta Hamilton, Bob west, Dan and Dean Denny. We toured the Union Station and the World War I Memorial. At noon, we ate lunch and I ate a candy bar. At the time, it didn't taste good, but I thought nothing of it. Later on, I got sick at my stomach. I went ahead and got on the bus, walked to the back and sat down. Every so often, I had to lean out the window and throw up. Must have been a classic case of food poisoning.

During the same year, I got into more trouble. As I previously wrote, there was a lot across the road with brush on it plus a pile of fence posts. One day, during noon hour, some of the guys found a 'possum which ran over to the pile of posts. We started chasing the 'possum back and forth across the posts. Finally we tired it out and Melvin skinned it. The teacher let us finish our "project" before we went back to class.

Later that year, an old tree fell over by our school yard. We started using it for a fort, standing behind it and shooting at each other. Then we decided to put a roof on it. It was just leaves and twigs, but it was cover. We decided to invite the girls in for lunch. In school, if you used slang or such, you'd get points taken off. Since it was usually just us guys, we didn't care how we talked. So we just said stuff like "ain't and darn". The girls told on us. That taught us a lesson – never trust a girl.

Even after college, I still had connections with the old school. Next to the schoolgrounds, was and old cemetery. I was farming with Dad. Since I was on a cleaning up binge I decided to clean up the cemetery. My brother, Gerald and I cut down all the brush and straightened up the headstones. When I was in school, I used to play there a lot.

The hardest part of my school career happened after I was out of college. After Dad finished farming, he sold his land to my sister Joy and husband, Ernst. This land included our old schoolgrounds. Ernst decided to plow up the ground, which was prairie sod. As I plowed up the ground, a part of me was leaving. I took a piece of the sod and put it in my yard. Then when we moved, we took the sod to the Lanesfield Museum.

On this land were ruts made from the Oregon Trail. As a child I used to play in the ruts. One time I lost my pocket knife in one of these ruts, but I found it later on. I found my knife but lost a piece of my childhood. While then, I plowed up my past, I hope to be planting it again in the minds of others to help cultivate the future of my children and theirs.

THRESHING

Before my time, my Dad used horses to pull the binder that cut wheat, oats and flax. Then he bought a tractor, removed the tongue or long pole the horses were hitched to and replaced it with a shorter ole to hitch the tractor onto. He used the tractor and binder until the mid-forties when he had his grain combined by neighbors. Later, he bought a combine.

The tractor pulled the binder which cut the grain, tied it in bundles which fell onto a carrier that had to be dumped onto the ground by whomever was riding on the binder. Then later, several bundles were stood on end and formed a shock with two bundles spread over the shock to shed the rain. The shocks remained in the field until the threshing crew picked them up.

Dad usually made arrangements with Walter Brecheisen to do the threshing. Walter's son, Freddie usually sat on the tractor to be ready in case a problem arose in which the power needed to be shut off, Wesley, another son, had a team of horses that pulled a rackwagon to haul the bundles to the threshing machine, There were other neighbors with horses and wagons to haul the bundles. One time, one of Oscar Brecheisen's mares had a cot that was a few months old. It ran along beside its' mother and rested when she stood still.

Stout high school boys or men pitched the grain bundles up onto the wagon for the wagonman to arrange so that the bundles would not slide off. The horses had to be driven very carefully over the field and road so that the wagon would not tip causing the bundles to shift and upset the wagon.

In order for the threshing machine to be ready for the bundles to be tossed into the feeder and the threshing process to start, Walter would drive the tractor pulling the machine to where Dad wanted the straw blown. The tractor was unhooked from the thresher and turned around to face the feeder. Next, a long wide belt was placed around the tractor's fly wheel and around a wheel on the thresher before the threshing process could start.

The drivers pulled their horses and wagons along either side of the threshing machine feeder so the grain bundles could be pitched onto the conveyor. The conveyor carried the grain over a shaker that separated the grain from the chaff and straw. The chaff and straw were blown out of the thresher through a long large pipe onto the ground to form a stack of straw for the cows to eat on all winter long. Wherever the stack became too tall the pipe would be moved to make it wider.

Meanwhile, the grain went through a pipe that had an auger in it, which carried the grain out a spout into a truck or horse drawn wagon. My Dad usually took care of the grain. Whenever the wagon or truck was loaded with grain someone would take it to the granary to shovel the grain with a big scoop shovel into the granary. Some of the grain was hauled to a grain elevator in Eudora to be sold.

Another part of the crew was the water carrier. Lloyd, Hazel and Janet Brecheisen, for many years, drove a horse and buggy to carry burlap wrapped jugs of cool water to the crew in the field and around the threshing machine. These July days were usually hot and humid so it took a lot of trips to keep the men's thirst quenched. When J.P., Jean and I were old enough, Mother let us take turns riding along in the buggy.

Since we "kids" were not very old, Mother always found some work that we could do, like filling a wash tub with cold water pumped from the well. The men used the water to wash up before eating. Wash basins, soap and towels were placed on some kind of bench under the big old walnut tree in the backyard. Sometimes, a mirror would be hung on a nail on the tree. The men usually removed their shirts, shook them to remove some of the dust and put them back on. No one went to the table without a shirt on.

The day of threshing meant getting up early since Mother and Dad had so much work to do. After milking and eating breakfast, Dad would go to Prairie Center after ice for the ice box and for cooling the iced tea and lemonade. Sometimes my cousin, Ella Lefmann went after the ice since my Mother did not drive.

Before my Aunt Jessie Lefmann moved, she and her daughter, Hazel helped Mother and my Grandmother Lefmann cook for the threshers. After that Ella and a neighbor, Tessie Gnase helped. Fruit pies and cakes were baked the day before and meat picked up from our cold storage locker in Eudora. Due to lack of refrigeration, cream pies had to be baked the day they were to be eaten.

There were vegetables to prepare and potatoes to peel. Meat was usually baked and the chicken fried. Since the men drank a lot of tea and lemonade, big crocks were filled with the freshly squeezed lemon juice, sweetened with sugar and mixed with water. The tea was made from boiling water poured over tea leaves and allowed to steep for a while, then the strong brew diluted with water. The ladies always fixed plenty.

The women always fixed plenty of food for all the hard working hungry men. Sometimes, there were men for supper if they wanted to finish up that day or had a late start. The men always knew that they would get a good meal at the Lefmann's.

Just about all the furniture, except the dining table and chairs were removed from the dining room so that the table could be stretched out. There were two shifts of men that would eat, with ten to twelve eating at a time.

It seems as though that it took two days to complete our threshing. Dad often traded off jobs with other farmers who helped him but he paid some of them by the hour. At the end of harvest, Dad would settle up wages.

The end of a threshing day did not mean that the farmers could go home and rest. Most farmer's wives and children took care of milking, "slopping the pigs" and other chores but there was always work that the farmer had to attend to. "Slopping the pigs" meant carrying the water and that used in the kitchen that was safe for the pigs to drink. This was one of the early ways of water conservation.

One of my memories of the men heading for their homes at the end of the day was of Wesley Brecheisen singing as he rode down the road on his bumping wagon.

CHURCHES

Margaret Gabriel wrote the following story about the Captain's Creek Methodist Church that Leoti Westerhouse read at a Church Celebration on October 28, 1984 at the Eudora United Methodist Church.

In 1859, a German Methodist Church was started along the Johnson County line southeast of Eudora and was called Captain's Creek. During the years 1861 to 1864, John P. Miller and J.J. Muller preached. The services were conducted in the German language and were first in the Joseph Miller home where Wesley Brecheisen lives. An Indian named Adams sold the land to Ed Knabe's father (Herbert's grandfather). Later Mrs. Knabe, a widow, married Joe Miller and they gave an acre of land for a church.

Some early records give minutes of three quarterly conference meetings. One was held February 22, 1868 in a school house at Captain's Creek. Some of the men present were: Mr. Hosch, H. Meyer (the local preacher), Mr. Rausch, Mr. Bromelsick, delegate, S. Miller and Mr. Hunziker, Sunday School Supt. It was reported that there were 91 pieces of literature and books. \$58.00 had been raised for the quarter of the minister and \$9.40 for the presiding Elder.

The third quarterly conference was held in Baldwin City on April 4, 1868. At this meeting it was decided that at the Lawrence Mission, a residence would be built for the minister and these brethren were appointed to be in charge: L. P. Merkel of Baldwin City, H. Meyer of Eudora, A. Bromelsick of Lawrence, I. Hosch of Captain's Creek, L. Esterle of Lawrence.

The fourth quarterly conference was held August 15, 1868 at Captain's Creek Church in the home of D. Muller. Among those in attendance were S. C. Miller, local minister and Traugett Gabriel, Sunday School Superintendent. The minutes of the meeting were entered in both the Lawrence Church and the Eudora Church.

In 1882, the Captain's Creek Church was built and dedicated. It was sometimes called "Little Blue" because that was the color the interior was painted.

The preaching continued to be in German, but a Sunday School class was taught in English. Leoti Westerhouse and Lillian Gabriel remember attending the class but did not stay for the German service.

While Rev. Ziedler was pastor in 1917, the German Methodist Church and the English Methodist churches united and from then on English was used for all services.

Eudora and Captain's Creek was one charge and shared a minister until 1955. The minister would come out to Captain's Creek and preach at 9:45 Sunday morning. Sunday School would be held after preaching.

In 1955, Eudora secured a full time minister and invited the Captain's Creek congregation to join them. Captain's Creek held a business meeting but voted against the plan. Several families took their Membership to Eudora, including the Lefmann, Westerhouse and Gabriel families.

The Captain's Creek Congregation continued to meet on the first and third Sundays with a Student Pastor, Rev. John Lewis from Edgerton. The church finally closed with families attending the Edgerton Methodist and Clearfield Evangelical United Brethren.

The ground reverted back to the Wesley Brecheisen farm and the church building is now used for storage.

In my great aunt Matilda Lefman Knabe's obituary, it was written that her father, John Henry Lefmann, helped build the church.

Some of the families attending the church from 1832 – 1954 were: John Kanzig's, Will Gnase's, Oscar Brecheisen's, Walter Brecheisen's, Wesley and Ramona Brecheisen, Jesse, Sarah and Esther Brecheisen, Frank , Albert and Lena Finley, John Finley's, Ed Knabe's, Mrs. Tina Gabriel, Paul and Jean, Sam, Sophie, Virgil and Amaretta Gabriel, Gus Gabriel's Harold Gabriel' and Alvin Gabriel's, Charles Rowe's, Phillip Lefman's and Amos Westerhouses.

Some of the ministers:

Rev. Rapier	1931-1936
Rev. Watson	1937-1943
Rev. A. L. Hughes	1944
Rev. Ira Willard	1945-1948
Rev. George Boicourt	1949-1953
Rev David Ellsworth	1954-1959

The Willard's daughter, Dorothy married Eugene Westerhouse. The only wedding ever held in the church was that of Maxine Westerhouse and Gayle Gerstenberger.

Rev. Boicourt married my husband and I at his home in Baldwin in 1953. Rev. Ellsworth baptized our daughter, Brenda in 1954 at the church.

Some of the youth leaders were: Leonard Finley and sister, Naomi Wakeman, Harold and Margaret Gabriel, Dorothy Denny Schulz, Edward Knabe, Lloyd and Hazel Brecheisen.

Gerald Rowe Oshel remembers Christmas time at "Little Blue" with the big Christmas tree and real candles. Also, each person received a sack of candy. The women sat on the right side of the church and the men on the left. A few of the younger men sat with their brides.

When the weather was nice on Easter, the Youth Fellowship group and leader has a Sunrise service outside, followed by a breakfast of bacon and eggs cooked over a fire. One Easter, it was rainy so the breakfast was cooked inside the church. Therefore the aroma of bacon and eggs still lingered in the church during church service.

The women usually cleaned the church before Children's Day which was the first Sunday in June. They decorated the alter rail with asparagus ferns woven between the posts. A variety of cut flowers were placed in vases around the building. Then the children sang songs and said pieces for the congregation on Sunday.

Every Sunday night, the Youth Fellowship group met at the church. We were invited to different homes for parties. The Denny's Westerhouse's and my parents had outside parties. The Oscar Brecheisen's had an indoor one. A sticky taffy pull was held at the Harold Gabriel's. At Christmas time, we went caroling in the neighborhood. The elderly really enjoyed having us come sing. They usually gave us candy or cookies.

One Halloween, a party was held in the old Dunkard Church, located near Leonard and Evelyn Finley's, northwest of Gardner. Guides led us through a spooky maze. There was a coffin with

a skeleton in it. We were to feel in a can of worms (cold spaghetti) and eyeballs (peeled grapes). Of course, all the time we had to keep our masks on. Then when we played games, one of which was to guess who was behind the masks, we removed our masks. Since there was not electricity in the church, lanterns were used to light the room. We were served cider and donuts for refreshments.

The Captain's Creek Methodist church leaders and parents were devoted to provide the youth with a religious background that would help them in years to come. Along with this, were good times with a nice group of young people. These memories will always be with us.

THE PRAIRIE CENTER FRIENDS CHURCH

The Prairie Center Friend's Church, now known as the Gardner Friend's Church, celebrated with a centennial in 1972. This first Friend's Church was built in 1869 and was known as the Prairie Center Friend's Meeting House. It was located in old Prairie Center, which was a few miles northeast of the south gate of the Sunflower Ordinance Works at 143rd and Edgerton Road.

The first records available, however, began with a meeting in 1872. The second parsonage was a house located on the mile north and east of the old Pleasant Valley School which belonged to Phillip Lefmann. In July, 1932 the Friend's bought the house and had it moved near the church in Prairie Center. Then it was moved along with the church to south of 143rd and Edgerton road. In May of 1942 the U. S. Government condemned the land around Prairie Center for the Sunflower plant.

In 1959, due to small attendance and lack of prospects for future growth, once again, the church was moved to land on the western edge of Gardner. The name was changed to Gardner Friend's Church.

Parts of the above story were taken from the Olathe Daily News and the Prairie Center Friend's History Book.

In the 1940's J.P., Jean, Gerald and I attended Bible School, Church and other activities at the church. One year, the Bible School had a play from the book of Ruth in the Bible. Forrest Rowe was Boaz and I was Ruth. Mrs. Audrey Gordon was one of the teachers and Rev. William Garrison was the Pastor then. Rev. and Mrs. James Hickman pastored later. Their children were Faye, Doris, Phillip and Jimmy.

Among the descendents of earlier families who still attend the church or live in the area are Chester and Maurine Richardson and Eldon and Audrey Gordon. Audrey's father, Rev. Leroy C Thornburg was a pastor at the Prairie Center Church in the 1930's. Rev. Thornburg and his grandson, Carl Gordon officiated at J.P. Lefmann and Gloria Gordon's wedding at the Gardner Friend's Church in Gardner on November 22, 1967.

Gloria, Carl, Glen and Lois are the Eldon Gordon's children.

Gathering history and memories about the Captain's Creek Community has led me to meet old acquaintances and make new ones, some in person, while others were through letters and telephone calls.

Om May of 1990. Marilyn Rowe Dugas, her husband, Aldeo and I drove throughout our old community to see the changes that were made since the 1950's. We wound around country roads and then drove back into the Prairie Centery Cemetery, which is located in a peaceful wooded area west of the now called Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant. There, we found graves of Marilyn's parents, Charles and Mary Rowe, along with the graves of the Blakeman's, Finley's, Gordon's and other well known families.

Marilyn's family home had been torn down but the chicken house and barn remain. There is a new home where my family lived. The Clark's remodeled their parents home for a son and family. Richard Knabe's built a new home and a few new farm buildings for their farm operation. Wayne Kanzig built a new home while keeping the old one as well. Yet other descendents of the original families have remodeled the old homes and continue to live in them.

The Old Rock Barn was torn down around 1983 but some of the rock was sued to build a retaining wall of a Catholic Church in Lawrence and for a smaller rock barn. The Hopewell and Pleasant Valley Schools ware gone but the land has been planted into row crops by the new land owners. The Captain's Creek Church was moved father back on Wesley and Ramond Brecheisen's land and is used for storage.

Our founding father's would surely be proud of the progress in the community and of their descendants since 1850. It is my hope that future generations will continue on with faith in God and pride in their families and community.