

small portion of the real troubles of being a telephone operator. The cranks who made mean remarks over the phone, remarks they would never think of making in person, were the bane of life. What with the terrible grind of sitting hour after hour, day after day, without proper rest, wore her down until Mrs. Cora Evans was glad to leave the post. One of the operators that Mrs. Evans helped train was Miss Naomi Wootton, who later became treasurer of Red Willow County.

WILLIAM JOSEPH EVANS

was born March 15, 1839 in Adams County, Illinois to Jesse Evans and his wife. He was the second son of a family of thirteen children. His parents were both born in Kentucky. During the 1850's he went west with a party of gold seekers, staking a claim near the present site of Denver, Colorado. He relinquished his claim and returned to his old home. When the Civil War started, he enlisted on July 1861 in the 50th Illinois Volunteers. He distinguished himself at the Battle of Shiloh and was promoted to Sergeant. On November 7, 1862 he was commissioned as a Captain in this regiment. On April 11, 1865 he was commissioned Major of the 118th Illinois Volunteers by Governor Oglesby. He resigned from the service on October 1, 1865, returning to Adams County, Illinois. On March 8, 1866 at Kingston, Adams County, Illinois he was united in marriage to Melessa MacLaskey. They resided in that county until 1867, when they moved to Macon County and lived there until 1885. In August 1885 they moved to Red Willow County, Nebraska, settling on the Hatfield ranch, southeast of McCook. They moved to McCook in December 1897 and resided there but three months. In the spring of 1898 they moved to a farm south of McCook. They made their home there until 1905 when they moved back to McCook. The Evans had eleven children: George Abraham (who died in infancy), Ira M. (who died June 13, 1919), R. B., J. Emmett, Claude A., Inna M., Mrs. W. E., Maude, Sarah B., Charles F., and William W.

William Joseph Evans died January 20, 1921 at McCook, Nebraska and was buried at the Longview Cemetery at McCook on January 24, 1921.

Wife of WILLIAM JOSEPH EVANS MELISSA MacLASKEY

was born February 15, 1844 in Pike County, Illinois to the George MacLaskey's. She was the third of 8 children. Both her parents were born in New York state. In 1856 the family moved to Adams County,

Illinois, where she grew to womanhood. She was united in marriage to William Joseph Evans on the 8th of March 1866 at Kingston, Adams County, Illinois. They moved to Nebraska in 1885 and lived in McCook after 1905. She died at her home in McCook on March 28, 1915 and was buried February 3, 1915 at the Longview Cemetery in Mc Cook. Her brother, James MacLaskey from Gridley, Kansas was present at the funeral.

F

JOHANNAS AND BARBARA (FRITZ) FIECHTNER

The fiechtner family arrived in America in the spring of 1893, settling first in the Bartley area. A year or so later they moved to southeast of McCook in the Ash Creek community. At the time of arrival, the family consisted of John and his wife, Barbara, a baby daughter Caroline, and Barbara's two children from a former marriage, Katherine (8) and Jacob (7) Degele.

The family began their journey from Hoffnungstal, Odessa, South Russia, by going down to the Black Sea. Here they took a boat to the seaport of Constantinople (now Istanbul) but were refused permission by the Turkish government to go through the canal. Disappointed they returned to Hoffnungstal, raised some more passage money and this time they went up to a port on the Baltic Sea, possibly Hamburg and on down through the North Sea to the English Channel. Here they were stopped by the English who in going through their personal things, kept what they wanted and destroyed others, leaving them very little to take on to America. Everyone suffered untold hardships on this ocean voyage. There were many burials at sea, especially children. It took them ten weeks or 2½ months to reach New York Harbor. As baby Caroline had the measles, they were quarantined for a time on Ellis Island.

In due time they began their journey by train to Indianola, Nebraska, arriving in the month of May 1893. After the liveryman had been paid to take them to the Leonard Harsch home, Johannas had exactly 50¢ left in his pocket. Relatives had long been waiting for their arrival, had a home ready for them, a garden planted etc. Mrs. Harsch was a sister to Barbara Fiechtner. Barbara also had brothers, Adam and Fred Fritz, living in the area. These families had left Russia in 1884 to establish homes in the United States.

On November 13, 1905 John Fiechtner became a citizen of the United States. Four more daughters,

Elizabeth, Dorothea, Marie and Emillie were born to this union. All were members of the St. John's Lutheran Church at Ash Creek.

Johannis B. Fiechtner was born February 5, 1863 at Hoffnungstal, Russia, the son of Gottlieb and Karoline (Wall) Fiechtner and died on April 20, 1933, at Hampton, Nebraska.

Barbara (Fritz) Fiechtner was born August 24, 1861 at Hoffnungstal, Russia, the daughter of Johann Michael and Katherina (Harsch) Fritz, died October 26, 1921 at McCook, Nebraska. Both John and his wife, Barbara, are buried in St. John's Lutheran Cemetery at Ash Creek, southeast of McCook.

Barbara married first ca. 1883/4 in Hoffnungstal, Russia to August Gottlieb Dagele, the son of Jakob and Katherina (Lutz) Dagele. August G. Dagele died ca. 1888 as a result of a farm accident. Two children were born to this union, Katherine and Jacob.

Her marriage to John Fiechtner occurred ca. 1889 or 90. Their daughter Carolina was born before they left Hoffnungstal, Russia.

Katherine Degele, born January 9, 1885, Hoffnungstal, Russia, married February 12, 1903 at McCook, Nebraska to Gotthilf John Breitling and died April 10, 1962. Her husband, John, was born January 8, 1874 at Berasina, Russia, the son of Philip and Carolyn (Strobel) Breitling and died September 26, 1959 at McCook, Nebraska. Both are buried at St. John's Lutheran Cemetery at Ash Creek. Their children, Rosina, William, Edna and Amos were born to this union.

Jacob Degele was born February 28, 1886, Hoffnungstal, Russia, and died April 21, 1957 at McCook, Nebraska. He was married April 22, 1909 at McCook to Mary (Dudek) Schlagel, daughter of Joseph and Frances (Horak) Dudek. Mary was born February 2, 1876 at Shueyville, Johnson County, Iowa and died January 16, 1947. Both are buried in Riverview Cemetery at McCook, Nebraska. Their children are Barbara Frances, Lila May and Lela Faye Degele.

Caroline Fiechtner was born March 4, 1892 at Hoffnungstal, Russia and died November 17, 1979 at Ogden Utah. She married on December 26, 1911, at McCook, Nebraska to Johann Serr, who was born July 18, 1882, Wesley, Russia, and died February 26, 1965 at Ogden, Utah, the son of Christian and Elizabeth (Schaffert) Serr. Both are buried at the Altorest Memorial Park Cemetery, Ogden, Utah. Their children are Victor John, Frieda Caroline, Ruby Elizabeth, Lorna Grace, Gene Dorene, Wilma Joan, Rose Elaine, Marvin Dean and Elnora Ruth.

Elizabeth Fiechtner was born August 11, 1893, at

Bartley, Nebraska and died in 1899 at McCook, Nebraska. She is buried at St. John's Lutheran Cemetery, Ash Creek.

Dorothea Fiechtner was born January 2, 1896 at McCook, Nebraska and married April 6, 1917 at Trenton, Nebraska to Elmore Thayer who was born May 23, 1896 at Maywood, Missouri and died July, 10, 1942. He is buried at Riverview Cemetery. Elmore was the son of Lewis and Annabelle (Minch) Thayer. Dorothea in 1981 is living in Ogden, Utah. Their children are Lucille Mary and Margaret Ruth Thayer.

Marie Fiechtner was born March 3, 1897 at McCook and died April 30 1957 at Ogden, Utah. She married on December 29, 1921 at McCook, to Fred Gustav Wall, who was born September 6, 1890 at Hayes County, Nebraska and died May 8, 1971 at Ogden, Utah, the son of George and Kathryn (Schaffert) Wall. Both are buried at Washington Heights Memorial Park Cemetery at Ogden, Utah. Their children are Barbara Ellen and Richard Fred.

Emellie Louise Fiechtner was born January 22, 1899 at McCook, Nebraska and was married October 26, 1919 at McCook to Carl Frederick Bamesberger, who was born July 17, 1897 at Hayes County, Nebraska, the son of Frederick and Katherine (Wall) Bamesberger. Both are living at 905 East First, McCook, Nebraska. Their children are: Arlene, Kenneth, Norma, Ruth, Lois, Iris and Dale Bamesberger.

The ancestors of John and Barbara Fiechtner left Germany in 1817 and were among the 64 families who founded Hoffnungstal, Russia, called "The Valley of Hope".

This story was written by Lela Harrison.

EDWARD HERMAN FIESTERMAN

was born March 25, 1879 in Effingham County, Illinois. He grew to his majority on the farm and moved to that part of Deuel County, Nebraska, which now forms Garden County. After serving a year as a cowhand for the Crecent Cattle Company, he was promoted to foreman, a post he held for five years. He found time to homestead a claim of his own, and acted as superintendent of the Pallet ranch, owned by John W. Webster of Omaha, until that great holding was disposed of. During several seasons, he was a hay contractor, very often harvesting more than three thousand five hundred tons of forage off the sandhills meadows. When he was a cowboy in the hills, he often hitched up his best span of prancers to a buggy and would drive thirty or more miles to a dance. On November 23, 1915, he was united in marriage to Marion E.

Bathrick. He and his wife came to Red Willow County and here in June 1927, he was appointed deputy County Sheriff by George McClain. Many of the things he learned about human nature, while a foreman over a body of hard riding cowboys, helped him in his occupation. His greatest hobbies were cattle and horses, with which he is known as an expert among his former sandhill friends.

STEPHEN FINN

was born on December 23, 1863 at Virginia, Illinois. While still a young man he came west and began working for the Burlington Railroad as a fireman. He was to work for this company forty-five years before retiring on November 29, 1933. He was promoted to engineer in 1898. He died on October 17, 1939 at McCook from the result of injuries received some two weeks before. The burial was at the Calvary Cemetery at Mc Cook on October 20, 1939. He was survived by his wife, daughter Margaret, who teaches at Niles, Michigan, a son Robert, an attorney at Tecumseh, and brothers James, Charles, Mace, John, Frank, Thomas, Robert, Edward and Leo.

MICHAEL H. FINNEGAN

was born March 19, 1845 at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. During the Civil War he enlisted in the United States Calvary in 1861 and was mustered out of the service at the close of the war. After the war, he went to Illinois, where he was married to Mary Jane Bryan on November 10, 1875. To this union two children were born. The family came to Nebraska in 1884 and settled six miles north of Bartley, later moving to Bartley. He died in May 1916 and was buried in the Bartley Cemetery.

Wife of MICHAEL H. FINNEGAN

MARY JANE BYRAN

was born March 5, 1847 at Lawrence County, Indiana. Her childhood was spent in Indiana and Illinois. On November 10, 1875 she was united in marriage to Michael H. Finnegan. In 1884 they moved to Nebraska, settling in Frontier County. They moved to Bartley in 1916, where she died on Friday, November 4, 1932 and was buried in the Bartley Cemetery.

ANDREW C. FINNELL

was born April 10, 1860 in Wisconsin. As a young man he homesteaded in Frontier County, in August of 1884, and lived there until 1917 when he moved to Indianola. He had an accident which resulted in his

leg being scratched. This developed into blood poisoning which brought about his death on Tuesday, October 22, 1935 at the Cambridge Hospital. His body was returned to Indianola and was buried in the Cedar Grove Cemetery. He was survived by his wife, Della V., and five sons: Lester, Marion, Wayne, Harold, and Wesley, and three daughters: Monta, Lotis and Della.

WILLIAM W. FISHER

was born in the state of Vermont on November 14, 1821. He moved with his parents to Coles County, Illinois when in his youth. While living there he was united in marriage to Jane Olmstead on August 5, 1847, but after a few years of happy life she passed away. He was later married to Martha E. Sims of Indianapolis, Indiana on March 13, 1861. The family moved to Red Willow County in 1879, and then to the city of McCook in 1882. The family later moved to Chase County in 1886, locating at Wauneta. He was one of the founders of this town, and was a highly respected citizen until the day of his death on May 10, 1898. He was buried in the Longview Cemetery, at McCook, Nebraska on May 12, 1898. Of his ten children, only five survived to mourn his passing.

WILLIAM CAROL FITCH

was born February 25, 1892, of pioneer parents, William and Estella Fitch. His early life was quite normal for a boy growing up in those days. He was married to Hazel Ball on October 22, 1912, and became the father on one daughter, Dorothy Fitch Nicholson.

He was a progressive and successful farmer. He saw the methods of dryland farming and the use of horses give way to the present use of tractor power and irrigation making the land more and more productive.

He was also interested in the progress of the country. For many years he served on the Board of Directors for the McCook Equity and was a charter member. He also served for many years as president of the Farm Bureau, which was the forerunner of the County Extension Service, of which he served on the Board of Directors.

One of his favorite projects was preparing special agriculture exhibits for state fair. He served as Agriculture Superintendent for the Red Willow County Fair for a good many years.

Leading 4-H clubs, taking boys to the state fair, helping them learn about farming, raising livestock, leading Boy Scout Troops, camping out with them at

Camp Opal Springs, helping them learn about their native land; all of these were dear to his heart.

Carol Fitch and L. C. Longnecker were superintendents for the Southwest Corn and Egg Show put on in 1927.

He was active in his church and served on the Methodist Church Board for several years and was a member for over 50 years. He was an active member of the Kiwanis Club, hosting picnics and watermelon feeds.

After he had to relinquish active farming, he liked to putter in the garden, particularly growing watermelons, which he generously gave to his friends. This was one of his great and satisfying pleasures.

In 1974, the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben presented Mr. Fitch the Nebraska Pioneer Farm Award. This award was presented to people whose families had owned the same land for 100 years.

After his death, he was buried in the Riverview Cemetery on August 9, 1975.

WILLIAM SHEODRON FITCH

was born December 28, 1838, in Johnson County, Missouri. His father, George Fitch, was a Methodist minister; his mother was Martha Cress. He became an orphan at the age of eight and went to live with his aunt Betsy and uncle John Essex, who had a family of ten children. In those days being a hard worker was a virtue and his aunt was proud of the fact that she "taught William to work."

On August 9, 1862, in Altove, Illinois, he enlisted in the Civil War, in Company G 89th Division of the Illinois Infantry and was discharged June 10, 1865 in Nashville, Tennessee. He took part in 20 battles and was wounded during the battle of Sone River. After the war he returned to Illinois and began to farm.

In 1869, he left Galva, Illinois to come west with an ox team expedition and later returned to the east. Then in 1872, he again came to Red Willow County. When he came back to stay he brought with him other people among whom was the Nettleton family, whose daughter, Estella, later became William's wife. They were married on March 26, 1874 by Judge Edgar S. Hill. He was the first judge in the county and this was the first wedding in the county. In order to discourage the rougher element of the neighborhood from staging a shivaree, Estella's parents invited everyone between Culbertson and Indianola, and those on Driftwood and Dry Creek to the wedding. Everyone had a good time and a considerable amount of wedding

cake was served.

Mr. Fitch applied August 23, 1873 for Timber Claim No. 2 in Nebraska with the stipulation that he plant not less than 2,700 trees. They were cottonwood, elm and black walnut. Later he planted a large orchard and shared the fruit with friends and relatives.

There was no county organized so W. S. Fitch, G. B. Nettleton, Royal Buck, and a few others got together and organized Red Willow County. G. B. Nettleson was the first County Superintendent of Schools, Edgar S. Hill the County Judge, and W. S. Fitch was one of the three commissioners.

The nearest store was at Indianola, so William Fitch opened up a store in 1873. This store was the first frame building in the county and later became the home of the Fitch family. The lumber for this house was hauled from Plum Creek (near Kearney). He called this store a hunter's post and it was used for public meetings, elections, Sunday School and various other public purposes. Indians and white men came from far and near to trade their furs and buffalo hides. He hauled his store supplies from North Platte with horses and a wagon. This building also housed the post office and was called the Walnuts.

Indians were frequent customers of this store and the two-story building amazed them. They would walk around it and say "heap big teepee". The Fitch family made friends with the Indians. One of the stories handed down tells of his finding and rescuing an Indian boy from some sort of a trap. He took the boy home with him where he and his wife nursed his wounds and fed him. The next morning he was gone. Word came of an imminent Indian raid so they and the neighbors left for Indianola. When they came back several homes were destroyed, but Mr. Fitch's sod hut remained intact. Mr. Fitch was also among the first people to arrive on the scene after the Indian massacre which occurred near Trenton.

Buffalo Bill and Wild Bill Hickok were visitors at the Walnuts. William lost his respect for Wild Bill when Hickok shot an Indian in the back so he could have his horse.

Business was good in the little country store until the grasshoppers and drouth came during the period from 1880-1890. The farmers couldn't pay their bills and Mr. Fitch ran out of money to buy supplies so was forced to close his store. One story tells of a family who headed back home to Illinois. They had no food so Mr. Fitch loaded their wagon with supplies to take them on their journey.

In order to take care of his family, he signed a

contract with the Burlington Railroad to furnish workers with meat. He killed buffalo and deer for them.

Mr. Fitch for many years was president of Red Willow County Agriculture Association and was a charter member of the McCook Equity which was established in 1915. He was instrumental in establishing the county fair in McCook. He contributed heavily to the beginning of the Congregational Church.

He was a kind husband to his wife and a gentle father for his two sons, Frank and Carol, two daughters, Geneva and Eurilla and he also raised two nephews, Linford and Alfred Fitch, who were orphaned at an early age.

The Fitch family home was open to strangers as well as friends. People who were traveling through were welcomed. His large wooded farm was a popular gathering place for Sunday picnics.

After living in Red Willow County, forty-five years, thru Indian scares, prairie fires, grasshopper plagues, and droughts, they lived to see the country change from Indians and buffaloes to a prosperous agricultural community. They moved to Florida in 1919, and then later moved to California, where they made their home with a married daughter, Mrs. Herman Anderson.

EDWARD ISAAC FLITCRAFT

was born in 1861 at Liberty, Indiana and migrated from there in the late 1880's when he was 19 years old, and began the occupation of dairying with Eaton and Eikenberry, dairymen. After becoming familiar with this area of employment, he acquired a small dairy herd and went into business for himself.

From the late 1890's and through the first quarter of this century, the name of Ed Flitcraft was synonymous with fresh milk in the entire community. There was almost no family, cafe or restaurant that did not have its five-cent-per-quart milk delivered every morning at the kitchen door.

The dairy farm was first located south and east of McCook a few miles, but it's better known location was the farm two miles west of McCook where the large family home still stands.

Mr. Flitcraft served a term as Red Willow County Sheriff during the mid-teen years, which was an added bit of action to his already busy days, for as customers increased he began an afternoon delivery route.

He was an affable, garrulous person who enjoyed people, especially those who inclined toward the

Republican Party in politics. In his zeal as a farmer and deliverer of milk he acquired and left a multitude of friends throughout the county.

He closed out the dairy and operated a small grocery store for several years through the late 1920's.

He was married to Cora Ann Clark on October 22, 1890 at Culbertson and they were the parents of four daughters: Erma, Leta, Fern, and Emily who died in infancy.

Edward passed away in his home in McCook on March 7, 1936, and was buried in the Memorial Park Cemetery on March 10, 1936.

VOCANSES J. FRANKLIN

was born January 12, 1841 at Huntington Mills, Lucerne County, Pennsylvania. In 1863 he enlisted in Company B, 119th Pennsylvania Volunteers and served to the end of the Civil War. He came west in 1872 and settled in Clay County, Kansas. For a time he engaged in the mercantile business in Beloit, Kansas, then moved to Indianola in 1879 entering into the general mercantile business there until 1883. He came to McCook and entered the banking business. At the time of his death, he was the President of the Citizens National Bank of McCook. He was united in marriage January 19, 1880 to Betty Alice Simpson at Beaver City and they were the parents of two daughters Vernice and Florence. He departed this life on Saturday, October 11, 1913 and was buried October 14, 1913 at the Riverview Cemetery, McCook.

Wife of VOCANSES J. FRANKLIN

BETTY ALICE SIMPSON

was born May 31, 1857 near North Washington, Iowa. In 1870 she moved to Beloit, Kansas, where she was united with the First Baptist Church. She was married to Vocanes J. Franklin at Beaver City, Nebraska on February 29, 1880. She died August 2, 1924 in McCook and was buried next to her husband in the Riverview Cemetery on August 4, 1924.

ARCHIE C. FURMAN

was born October 4, 1869 at Mehoopany, Pennsylvania. He came to Red Willow County, and began publication of the Danbury News in 1893. In 1909 he started the Marion Enterprise. He consolidated the two papers in 1922. In 1938 his publications were merged with the McCook Daily Gazette. He passed away at his home in Danbury on Thursday, July 30, 1953 after an illness of almost a year. His funeral was held on

Monday August 3, 1953 and he was buried in the River-view Cemetery at McCook. He was survived by two daughters: Mrs. Hazel Armstrong and Lucille, as well as two sons D. A. and Charles.

G

HENRY GALE

was born near Bellevue, Ohio on July 14, 1837 to Franklin and Sally Ray Gale. In response to President Lincoln's first call for volunteers in 1861, he enlisted in the Eighth Ohio Volunteers for a period of three months. He re-enlisted on September 30, 1861 in the 55th Ohio Volunteer Infantry and was discharged on account of disabilities on April 23, 1863. He was united in marriage to Nellie Earl at Beaver Dam, Wisconsin in 1866, and they had six children, four daughters; Marion, Hattie, Sallie and (?) and two sons; G. R. and H. F.

The family emigrated to Nebraska in 1884 and filed on a homestead in Driftwood precinct. In 1902 he retired from the farm and they moved to McCook, where he resided till his death on November 16, 1920 and was buried November 18, 1920 in the Longview Cemetery at McCook.

Wife of HENRY GALE

NELLIE EARL

was born at Rutland, Vermont on November 7, 1841. She was the youngest daughter of Horace Earl, and was a descendent of one of the oldest families in New England. She was educated at Utica and Herkimer New York where the family resided during the early part of her life. After a brief residence in Pennsylvania, her family moved to Wisconsin. She was united in marriage at Beaver Dam, Wisconsin on December 12, 1862 to Henry Gale, a Civil War veteran. They moved to Driftwood precinct, Red Willow County in 1884. There they were to endure the privations and hardships incidental to homesteading in those early days. She was to make good use of her skill in nursing and with the needle. She assisted at the many entrances to and departures from the life among the homesteaders. She freely offered her services to the afflicted as unhesitatingly as did the country doctors. Since she had no set scale of fees, she accepted anything tendered in return for her services. However, on most occasions, she refused payment feeling that they needed the gift more than her family. She found more pleasure and satisfaction in giving than in receiving. She observed a rigid code

of ethics, was a faithful wife and a tender and loving mother. After a long and useful life, she departed this life on March 6, 1924 at Eckley, Colorado at the home of her daughter, Marion, and was buried on March 8, 1924 at McCook, Nebraska.

JAMES M. GAMMILL

was born on October 14, 1843 at New Lisbon, Ohio. He enlisted June 3, 1863 in Company M, Third Iowa Cavalry, and served in this unit until the end of the Civil War. He was discharged at Atlanta, Georgia, where he had followed General Sherman on his March to the Sea. His marriage to Theresa Allen came on December 4, 1878 and they were the parents of nine children. The family moved from Pleasanton, Iowa and settled in Frontier County in the early 1870's. The family moved to McCook, and he departed this life on June 2, 1931. He was buried at the Bartley Cemetery on June 3, 1931.

ELIAS GANAGA

was born in William County, Ohio on February 3, 1839. He was married to Ellen Crockford on January 28, 1869. To this union were born five children: one son and five daughters. He enlisted in the 55th Ohio Infantry in 1864, and was in the service till the end of the war, receiving an honorable discharge. They moved to Nebraska in 1870, and located in Red Willow County in 1872. He died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Ida Miles, on Thursday, April 3, 1913, in Elwood, Nebraska. He was buried Saturday, April 5, 1913 in the Cedar Grove Cemetery in Indianola, Nebraska under the auspices of the G.A.R.

ALEXANDER TRABER GATEWOOD

was born December 12, 1852 at Malden, West Virginia to Robert Gatewood and Julia Jones. His father was a forty-niner and crossed the country to California as a captain of a wagon train and returned home on a sailing vessel by the way of Cape Horn. On his return home, he engaged in the salt manufacturing business in Malden and among the slaves who worked for him was Booker T. Washington, who learned his a b c's marking salt barrels. Alexander was perhaps one of the few men in this section who possessed a slave of his own. As a child, he had seen slaves bought and sold on the auction block. Even at that age, he realized that traffic in humanity was wrong. At an early age, he moved with his parents to Cincinnati, where he received his early education. At the time