

The following was found by Hazel Matthews of Oxnard, California, 1994. She copied it from a bound scrapbook of information to be used in the Bicentennial Biography Book, Riley County Genealogical Society, 908 Kearney, Manhattan, Kansas, 66502. Hazel found it in the Allen County Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

PIONEER HISTORY RELATES THAT "Things are not too bad when you can get a yard of calico for a pound of butter.

The following is a letter written for the "Times" and printed in the issue Dec. 31, 1936. Even though it was primarily about a family it had so much interesting history that we felt you'd enjoy reading it again. Contributed by J. N. Wanamaker.

Upon the death of my wife, Sadie Paul Wanamaker, Jan. 1, 1936, I realized that I had forgotten many facts concerning Mrs. Wanamaker's girlhood and family genealogy that she so often talked about, so I wrote a letter to her oldest sister, Mattie Paul Rippy, of Marshall, Oklahoma, for some of her girlhood history. Mrs. Rippy is the oldest child of the Paul family and will be 83 years old in May 1937 and is still living a very active life, owning and maintaining her own home in Marshall, Oklahoma. Knowing that her children, grandchildren and many of Mrs. Wanamaker's old friends would be glad to read some of the early Kansas history contained in reply to my request, with the consent of Mrs. Rippy, I am having printed the following which are part of her letter to me.

SAMUEL ALLEN WALKER (grandfather) born in Virginia, Feb. 1785.
NANCY ANN THOMPSON (grandmother) born in Bolling Green, Ky, Feb. 1805
Married at Rock Island, Illinois

Father, WILLIAM PAUL was born in BALLYMENA, ANTRIM CO. IRELAND, Feb. 16, 1830.

Mother, ELIZA ADELINE WALKER, was born at ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS Jan. 26, 1836.

Father and Mother were married June 30, 1853.

Soon after Grandpa PAUL'S death in Ireland, father came to America in the year of 1847. For seven years he worked at various places and was married at ROCK ISLAND as stated.

There were 8 children in the WALKER family, 3 sons and 5 daughters. There were several stepbrothers and sisters by a former marriage. I only knew one, John Walker. I remember mother went to visit him once. John was the oldest stepbrother and the father of Tom and Carol Walker of IRVING, KANSAS.

Mother was next to the youngest of the children by Grandfather's second marriage. The three boys died, and the five girls who lived were Harriet, Juliette, Sarah, Mother and Mary. Mother lived longer than any of the others, passing away in her 93rd. year. September 4, 1928.

Harriet was the oldest of the five girls and married a man by the name of WILLIAMS, but he died in a year or so, leaving a baby boy. The baby boy grew up and married and died about 40 years ago, leaving 2 children. His widow married again and I have lost track of them.

The next girl, Juliette, married JOHN PITMAN. They had 8 children, Ada, Ritha, Frank, Will, Emma, Lizzie, Ed and Belle.

Ada Pitman, married FRANK LANE, his father homesteaded and owned part of the farm you now own. They had 3 children, Ed Lane, Mary Lane, and Cora Lane. Ada died in Los Angeles three or four years ago.

Ritha Pitman, married but had no children. She has been dead many years.

Frank Pitman, married but died in Nebraska many years ago, leaving a wife and I think 2 children.

Will Pitman, was single and while working in a tunnel was killed in an explosion about 40 years ago.

Emma Pitman, as you know, made her home with mother for some time and was living with her when you and Sister Sadie were married. Em married WILLIS SHORT. They resided southeast of IRVING on a farm joining ours. After a few years they sold their farm, moving to LOS ANGELES, where Em passed away last June, a year ago.

Lizzie Pitman, married but had no children. The last I heard was living on a fruit farm in Southern California.

Ed and Belle Pitman, died young.

John Pitman, came to Kansas in 1867 and took a claim on the LITTLE BLUE in Washington County and later sold it and left. Both have been dead many years.

AUNT SARAH married SAMUEL SWANK, and they had three children. WILL SWANK, CARRIE SWANK and CORA SWANK. The girls have been dead a long time and Will Swank, the last I heard, lived in Calif. Parents dead.

MOTHER, next in line, had 5 children, MARTHA, FRANK, SADIE, CLARA and WILL. I am the oldest and now in my 83rd year and Will is the youngest, in his 74th year. Frank, Sadie and Clara have now passed on to their reward.

AUNT MAY, married EUGENE HOLLY and 1 child lived to be grown, I have lost track of him. Later Aunt May married a man by the name of JOHN SLOAN. He had one child, a son, who made his home with them until his father died and his stepmother passed away and now is living in Cleveland, Ohio. He was married after his father and stepmother died.

FATHER, lived first near ROCK ISLAND, IL, FRANK and I were born there. Father left there sometime in the summer of 1858, staying in IOWA CITY about 6 months. While in Iowa City, SADIE was born, Oct. 16, 1858.

JOHN SWANKS family had come out to Kansas before and built a log cabin and then came back to Iowa City, and we settled there with them during the winter of 1858 and 1859. We came to Kansas in the spring of 1859, lived awhile in the log cabin, built previously by the SWANK'S near the BLUE RIVER north of BLUE RAPIDS.

FATHER built a log cabin on a piece of land north of BLUE RAPIDS and I think he filed on this piece of land and must of lost it, for we only lived there something over a year. Then we left and moved to a cabin in north BLUE RAPIDS, it was maybe 10 or 12 rods north of the west end of the bridge over the dam.

SISTER CLARA, was born there April 21, 1861. We lived there until the

fall of 1862, about the time father enlisted in the army. His company was stationed for a while in MARYSVILLE. He got a furlough so he could come home and move us to Missouri on account of the fear of INDIANS who were then roaming around this part of Kansas. We took 6 cows with us. SWANK'S had gone back to Missouri and we went there and lived with AUNT SARAH in a log cabin the first year, then mother and a distant cousin, HARRIET WHITMORE, rented another farm with a one room log cabin and we lived together, Harriet had 3 children, the oldest a boy 15 years old with what he could do we managed a crop. The cows ran out and had to be hunted every night. The next year they rented another farm that had a double log cabin on it besides the NODAWAY river and lived there until Father was discharged from the army and came home in the summer of 1865.

In the NODAWAY river at one place for about 1/2 mile the stream was filled with drift wood. The oldest inhabitants said it had always been so. People use to cross on foot on this drift. When the river was up the drift would rise and fall with the river. To my knowledge it may be there yet. We lived there until the spring of 1866, then came back to Kansas and lived in a one room log cabin on the RODKEY farm north of IRVING, living there for 2 years. Irving, at that time, had an Academy built by some eastern educators from New York state and that was the reason Father settled there, so we children could go to school. It was a wonderful school at that time and we children have never forgotten its instructors and what it meant to us at that time.

Father homesteaded the 80 acres north of the BLUE RIVER, from the RODKEY farm where we lived, and built a log cabin of one room, later he added a lean too frame kitchen, it stood about 4 rods northwest of the present Stone house. After a few years Father bought 100 acres of bottomland out of the LANE farm joining this 80 acre homestead. You now own this land.

The school house known as the FAIRVIEW was built in 1870 and O. A. SEATON, taught the first school and lived with us. We had a bed up in the loft of the log cabin where he slept. There was a ladder against the wall and he went up and down that to his room, and I remember in the winter time when the blizzard came his bed would be covered with snow, but it was part of a pioneer's life. Father built the Stone house as it stands now, in 1876.

I was married the next summer. I lived in 9 log houses, went to school in 4, taught a term of school in SHROYER neighborhood in a log cabin. Mother taught school 1 year in Missouri while Father was in the army and paid HARRIET WHITMORE one dollar a week to care for the little ones in the day time. I will now give you a few more interesting events in the early days of KANSAS.

The year 1860 was known as the dryest year in the West. A man came up the Arkansas river in a boat to FT. SMITH, Ark, there never was enough water in the river to float the boat again until the next year in March. The man had to stay in FT. SMITH and cut cord wood during the winter.

In 1866, there was almost no rain, all the corn father raised was raised there. Frank carried that out in a sack.

In 1869, was the flood year and the blue stem grass on the prairies and in the bottom fields was the heaviest ever known before or since. The blue stem grass was from 6 to 8 feet tall everywhere.

There were no settlers on the prairies to speak about at this time.

In 1873 the 15th of April there came a snow that drifted over the top of the fences and a smaller snow came the 22nd, the same month. No farming was done until May and they cut wheat and oats in August. That year I was teaching between the two BLUE RIVERS. is why I remember it.

In 1867 or '68, the grasshoppers came the first time (these were the flying kind) by night the corn growing, which was in the roasting ear stage, were left only the stalk and part of the ear from the middle down which never amounted to much for feed. They lit on the trees and the small bushes were bent down from the weight like you have seen the ice do from sleet. They just about ate everything and stayed and laid their eggs. The eggs hatched the next spring but as soon as their wings were long enough they took flight without doing further damage. They came again in 1873 repeated the same as in 1868 laying their eggs which hatched in the spring and again departed. To those who have never witnessed the coming of grasshoppers will say they came in droves which darkened the sun like a cloud and for days you could look toward the sun and see stragglers flying and you wondered if more were coming.

Father farmed and lived on the homestead until the early fall of 1889, when he died. Mother remained on the farm with her youngest child, a son, who was still at home. How ever later on, WILL decided to start out for himself. He went south and found his chosen field, Civil Engineering. Eventually he married a southern girl and has reared a family of 4 boys. A few years ago he retired from active work and is now residing at EDNA, TEXAS. After WILL left the home place, the older brother FRANK, moved on the farm, remaining there several years, then moved back on his own farm. Mother rented the farm and eventually moved to the home of her daughter SADIE, where she resided the remainder of her life, some 31 years, passing away in 1928 in her 93rd year.

Soon after FRANK moved to his farm he purchased stock in the GREAT WESTERN PLASTER MILL of BLUE RAPIDS and moved his family to town where he built a fine home. Selling this home, he rebuilt another on an adjoining lot and only lived a few years after, passing away in the year 1926 in his 71st year.

JAY, I expect you wonder how we got through those hard years of drouth, I don't think any one starved, but I know they were hard up. We fared better than some, for Father knew how to burn and make charcoal, there was no stone coal here then and all the hauling was done with ox teams and wagons and 16 miles were about a day's travel and the black-pit (that is what they called it, but it was pyramid shape above ground). They cut four foot wood and stood it on end in a circle about 16 foot in diameter, leaning the outer sticks in, then another tier on top of that, then a third tier on top of that, making 12 to 14 high, then it was covered with a layer of leaves, hay or straw and this covered with dirt about 6 or more inches thick. Had four or five vent holes at the bottom. Then he put fire down in the center and stopped it tight on top. It would take 10 days or so for it to get in charcoal. He had to watch it day and night. Sometimes a place would burn too fast and the cover fell in then he would do what they call feeding it, fill up the places with more wood and use grass and dirt and close it up tight; when it was all in charcoal, he would close up all the vent holes for several days and smother out the fire and as soon as it cooled it would be ready for market. Then he would

load it in the wagon and with the ox team, take it to MARYSVILLE, and sell it to the blacksmiths at so much a bushel. A lot of hard work, but it was ready cash. Everything had to be hauled from ATCHISON. One time while we lived in BLUE RAPIDS, Father went with the oxen and wagon to Atchison and he took another ox with him and sold him and bought provisions. As he came back he stopped at old man LANE'S, they were out of food and hungry. Father gave them some provisions and they were so hungry they ate too much and made them sick. I heard father say old man Lane never forgot that. Father burned and made charcoal after he moved on the homestead. His pit was near the slate stone ford where you cross the creek over to your home place.

In the drouth of 1868, father bought wheat and took it to the BARRETT MILL on the VERMILLION and had it ground and used the bran and shorts for stock feed. He would put the flour in 100# seamless sacks and sell it to the neighbors for \$5.00 per cwt. One day Mrs. ROLAND STRANGE came and said they were out of flour and money; that Roland had gone to Atchison to find work, as soon as he sent her some money she would pay for the flour. She took it home and later came and brought ten dollars and took another #100. ROLAND STRANGE was the father to TOM and JOHN STRANGE and SAM SAVILLES' wife.

It was several years later before the stores got to keeping flour. For fruit we had wild plums, gooseberries and wild grapes. Father made a homemade wooden cane mill and we made sorghum molasses. You could hear that mill squeak for a mile when it was running. One time somebody came through with apples to sell and father bought a bushel for \$2.00. My, but they tasted good.

For awhile we did not have shoes at the stores, so a neighbor came and measured our feet and made our shoes. With father and UNCLE JOHN SWANK, both in the army, mother and Aunt Sarah would go to the mill. They never had done such a thing, but they went in the morning and left me to take care of Frank, Sadie and Clara and Aunt Sarah's three children. Will was a baby and they took him along with them. I was nine years old the others from 1 to 7. They got there alright. The miller asked them if they had another sack, they told him they thought when he tolled the grain the sacks they had would hold and then he'd never tolled a war wide _____ grist and he never would and hunted up another sack and gave them all of the grist. It was after dark when they got home. I had baked some bisquits on the fire place and we were all there and alright. I never went to town or was in a store the time father was in the army, my job was to stay and take care of the other children. After we moved to the RODKEY farm, one day mother took me Irving with three dozen eggs and told me to buy calico to make the girls sunbonnets. I got forty cents a dozen for the eggs and paid 40 cents a yard for the calico. I'll always remembered what mother said when I came home. "Well things are not so bad when you can get a yard of Calico for a pound of butter or a dozen eggs" I have often wondered how mother managed? Father's pay was only \$13.00 a month while in the army and there went to eat and clothe. We had enough to eat and something to wear and stayed home all the time.

I hope I have answered your questions fully, much more could be written about the early pioneer's of Kansas, but suffice it to I have said enough for this time.

Sister Mattie