



Quivira Notes



June 2009

**Don't
Forget!**

*Next meeting
June 9th*

Dinner: 6:00 pm

Senior Center

220 N. 3rd

Sterling, KS

Call Linda at

*620-241-8719 or
email*

blkcolle@swbell.net

*By June 5th for
dinner reservations*

*The July 19th meet-
ing will be at the
Old Mill Museum in
Lindsborg. Harry
Myers will present*

*"Between the Riv-
ers, Journeys to a
Far Off Land."*

John Atkinson to Present "The Life and Times of William Bent"

John Atkinson will bring William Bent to life at the next Quivira Chapter meeting on June 9th in Sterling. The meeting will be held at the Jefferson Plaza Senior Center, 220 N. 3rd in Sterling. Dinner will be provided by the Quivira Chapter beginning at 6:00p.m. followed by the meeting and program at 7:00p.m.

William Bent operated Bent's Fort on the Upper Arkansas from 1833 until 1849. William, along with his brother Charles and Ceran St. Vrain, managed a vast fur trading empire rivaling that of the American Fur Company. Bent's Fort was the only place of refuge and comfort on the Santa Fe Trail between the settlements of Missouri and the Mexican outposts of Taos and Santa Fe. Most of the famous people of the period passed through Bent's Fort including General Kearney and the Army of the West on it's way to make New Mexico part of the United States. William Bent destroyed the adobe fort in 1849 then built the stone Bent's New Fort downstream. Bent was married in 1835 to Owl Woman, daughter of the keeper of the Cheyenne Medicine Arrows. Two of his sons fought on the side of their mother's people in the brutal Indian Wars following the Sand Creek Massacre. Bent became an Indian Agent for a brief time but he was hauling freight when he became ill with pneumonia from which he died a few days before his 60th birthday in May of 1869.

John Atkinson portrays William Bent as Bent might have reviewed his colorful life in the days before he died. John developed an interest in Bent's Old Fort and the Bent & St. Vrain Company after his first visit in 1996 to the restored fort in Southeastern Colorado. In recent years John has been "William Bent" before numerous

groups including the attendees at the 2008 Cultural Awareness Days at New Mexico's Fort Union National Monument. Atkinson will share stories of William Bent's eventful life including and the successes, failures and frustrations of trying to bring together three diverse cultures. John will also provide some little known facts about Bent's fourth wife Adalina Harvey and the recent finding and marking of her grave.

Atkinson is a past president of the Gateway Chapter of OCTA. He is currently the national Vice President of the Santa Fe Trail Association and has served two terms as the Missouri Representative to the Board of Directors of SFTA. John received Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Emporia State University and an EdD from Oklahoma State University. He is Professor Emeritus at Missouri Western State University in St. Joseph, Missouri, having retired in 2000 after 43 years of teaching mathematics.



John Atkinson as William Bent

Boy Scout Uses Project to Give Direction

As printed in The McPherson Sentinel Sat Apr 18, 2009

Ethan Grennan has been a Boy Scout since he joined the values-based youth organization with his friends in the first grade. The 17-year-old is now on his way to becoming an Eagle Scout, the Boy Scout organization's most prestigious honor. But before the honor is bestowed, Grennan must complete his service project, a task that has been months in the making.

To become an Eagle Scout, Grennan must earn at least 21 merit badges, attend a board of review conference and a Scoutmaster conference and organize, manage, oversee and complete an extensive service project. After hearing about the need for signage along the Santa Fe Trail's route through McPherson County, Grennan decided to make the project his Eagle Scout project. As part of the project, Grennan must place about 34 signs between 14th Avenue and the McPherson, Rice county line.

Because the signs mark a trail that is no longer in use, Grennan said sometimes he has had to ask permission to put signs up inside farmers' fields and on the sides of busy roads.

He began the planning phase of the project last summer and has the goal of being finished by his 18th birthday on April 23. "I only have a few more signs to put up," said Grennan. "It's for an auto tour, the arrows on the signs basically follow the Santa Fe Trail."

Tammy Hanna, director of the Coronado Quivira Museum, part of the Rice County Historical Society, said the signs help people follow the path as closely as possible. She explained that because a lot of the trail is now on property owned by private citizens, it's impossible to walk the actual trail, but with the metal signs, it is possible to see where the trail was from the road. "You have to follow the roads

which take you by different sites," said Hanna. "People want to be closer to where the trail is and the signs allow them to do that."

Once all signs are place, Grennan said he will have completed all of the requirements to become an Eagle Scout. "This project would wrap up my becoming an Eagle Scout, which would take away a lot of pressure," said Grennan. "But it's also something I think is pretty cool too, because I don't think people realize how much history we have right outside McPherson. You can still see the wagon ruts in the ground out there."

Grennan said he couldn't have gotten the project done without the help of his father, younger scouts and Britt and Linda Colle, current president of the Quivira chapter of the Santa Fe Trail Association. "Britt has helped out a lot, he got all the materials for us," said Grennan. "There's no way I could have done this project on my own."

Grennan is one of the last of his friends to gain the rank of Eagle Scout. He said his goal of becoming an Eagle Scout is just as much for the title as it is for the completion of the chapter in his life as a boy scout. "This is for the Eagle Scout rank, it's the highest rank you can get," said Grennan. "Some kids think it's kind of goofy that I am still in Boy Scouts until they hear about the benefits." Once his Eagle Scout status is attained, he will be eligible for all of the benefits that come along with the rank, including college scholarship money and benefits in the armed forces.



Boy Scout Ethan Grennan stands beside a sign he placed along 14th Avenue south of McPherson. The sign marks the route of the historic Santa Fe Trail.



HISTORY OF OLD EMPIRE

Empire was located in McPherson County, near the present city of Galva

Old Empire was a wonderful place, over 80 years ago. Everyone was so sorry when the railroad came through, and the town was moved, two miles north and one west, then one half north, to the railroad, and the name was changed to Galva. The name Old Empire, though, still remains to that corner of Sections 35 and 34 of Empire Township and the opposite ones in Lone Tree Township. The town was in each township and also on both sides of Turkey Creek, which was never known to run dry in this locality. The school house was built on the west side of the section line running north and south and on the south side of the road going east and west. The school district was over four miles square. This building was also used as the church. It was a Christian Church, although among the attendance there were Methodists and Presbyterians and one Catholic family, the McVays. Some came from many miles away as it was the first church in the community. The Lowrey's came to the community in 1870, from Findlay, Ohio. They lived with Adam Dielman's family until they could build their house. Cornelius Drum and Mr. Meek also came in 1870. Mr. Meek lived with Mr. Drum until he built his own house. Perhaps others came that year as many had homesteads. J. J. Colby was the first Postmaster. He homesteaded the quarter on which the school house was later built. He also gave the SE corner of his quarter for a cemetery, which is called Empire Cemetery, although located in Lone Tree Township. Mr. Colby was also the first Sheriff. The first grave in Empire Cemetery was for a Mr. Sauer who was frozen so badly when lost in a blizzard that he lived only a month afterwards. He had been out with a yoke of oxen and was found by the Middleswart boys, about a mile and a half south of his home which was just north of Old Empire school house. Another early grave was that of two young brothers buried together. They were killed when the roof of their house fell in and smothered them.

Mr. Haskins was the first Dr. and druggist. Mr. Drew was the first blacksmith. Sound carried far in those days, and you could hear him shoeing horses every day. S. B. Turner had a drygoods and grocery store, hauling his goods from Newton, Kansas, by team. Mr. Meek was the first teacher; his wife also taught, and also their daughter, Fay. Fay later married Arthur Finkle, and was married in the same school house where she had taught school. The first preacher in this school house, which was also used as a church, was a Rev. Servy who had a blind wife. Everyone loved them and called her, "Dear old blind Mary."

Turkey Creek was used for baptising, at a deeper place on the Dielman farm. At one baptismal service, Joseph Finkle started the old hymn, "Pull for the shore, brother."

S. P. Lowrey was Justice of the Peace. E. D. Minton was another early teacher. There was a mill, run by steam, on Turkey Creek, owned by a Studebaker or Brubaker, who ground corn. This locality being on the Santa Fe Trail, many soldiers camped here. Also others going farther west, so a stockade was built out of cottonwood logs for the animals. Later this stockade was dug up and the logs used for buildings.

Besides the store mentioned before, George Foster had a store, together with a Mr. Fairhurst. Dr. George had an office above the store and Mrs. Doyle had the Post Office in the store. She was also Galva's first Postmaster in 1879 when the town was moved to the railroad.

Among others in and around Old Empire, not mentioned before, were the following names: BURTON, HUNGERFORD, BARNES, CRAMER, MORSE, SOCKWELL, COLLIVER, TINSLEY, LEWIS, PACK, GATEKA, BUNNELL, RITZ, MUN, CORNWELL and many others. Jim Wilson taught music every winter.

Zack Drew was the first photographer in McPherson. Sherman Lowery was a great literary man, finally going to Pittsburg, Pa. where he taught in the school for many years. One joke about Sherman, he said if he ever married, she would have to be a good one. And he did marry a lady named Goodman who lived near McPherson.

Mr. Drew's son married Mary "Mollie" Lowery. He died before they were married a year, so she was wife, mother, and a widow within a year, and although young, never married again, but lived with and helped her mother. Mrs. Lowery raised lots of cucumbers which did well on the sod. She put them in barrels of salt water every fall. When she had all she wanted, she let the neighbors pick the rest. These neighbors came on horseback for their cucumbers. Much wheat and watermelons were also raised, but one year, the grasshoppers came. The settlers shocked their corn and tried to save it, but the grasshoppers ate the shocks also. This ravage brought on hard times and relatives and others in the east sent boxes of food to help out. One family received some ham and dried apples. One young man liked dried apples, so he filled his pockets and back of his coat with them and all day while in the field working, ate dried apples and drank water. Naturally they had to have the Doctor for him and it was several hours before he got relief. Of course there were lots of hard times and troubles but lots of fun, too. The church was the center of the Sunday school and of social activities. The people were friendly and humorous. They were pioneers, brave enough to try a new country. The Sunday school got a prize at a picnic one day. It was at what they called Lay's Grove. On a Saturday afternoon on the way there, the group passed a man plowing, with a walking plow, of course. They all began to sing, "Hold on, hold on, my brother, hold on, hold on until the prize is won, hold on to the plow and worry not now, for the work is almost

History of Old Empire, cont'd

done." The man plowing waved and smiled at them.

For fuel, the settlers gathered cow chips, and if a rain was coming, hurried to get them someplace in a shelter. Some burned cornstalks and even corn. Some prospected for coal. Loren Cramer and Nat Colby worked to sink a hole over 100 feet deep. They used a wooden tub to sink men and lift dirt, using oxen for power. Only a small trace of coal was found. Many years later, a large oilfield was developed starting one half mile east.

These early settlers were bothered with horse thieves, so they formed an Association called the Anti-Horse Thief Association. If a thief was caught, he was tarred and feathered and rode out of the community on a rail. This was a secret organization and the names of members were not known. Needless to say, not many horse thieves were around after the order was formed.

There was always the danger of prairie fires; also many hard blizzards. Once one man had two two-year-old colts on a picket pin. A terrible snow storm came and the colts were so frightened that they ran and ran around those pins. The man had to go out in the storm and get the animals into a shed. His mother had left clothes on the line to freeze and bleach. The wind blew the clothes and line away. In the spring, she found her "shimmy" in Wilson's yard over a mile away. This caused some laughter. Once, the house of a family was struck by lightning. It came down the stove pipe, lifted the stove up, set it down again, and broke all the legs. The old man raised up in bed and said, "What the devil's up." He was shocked and had to stay in bed all the next day. The mother had saved some flower seeds and garden seeds in a lot of small bottles, having no storage place, she stored them in the rafters. The bottles all fell and broke, the seeds were scattered every-

place. They fell on a little girl who was sleeping on the floor.

Many other interesting stories might be told of those early days for there were many hardships and much sadness, but many humorous happenings and pleasures and the neighborliness was grand. In case of a death, the neighbors assisted and probably hauled the corpse in either a spring wagon or a wagon behind horses. If a roof was to be raised, the neighbors helped. In sickness, neighbors sat up with the ill. Neighbors donated food and clothing for those who were poor.

Written by Leota Lowery Beard and Bell Drum Hungerford.

The following was sent from the Postal Dept., Washington, D. C. to Jessie Cramer. It was sent by her to Edna Myers and she in turn gave it to the Galva Post Office to keep with other papers.

Post Office of Empire, McPherson County, Kansas, was established October 7, 1872, with Joseph J. Colby as the first Postmaster. Name of the office was changed to Lone Tree on August 10, 1880. The Lone Tree Post Office was discontinued May 9, 1888.

The Post Office of Galva, Kansas, was officially established October 1, 1879, with Alexander G. Robb as first Postmaster.

Construction of the Santa Fe Railroad

Written by Pappy Rishel (W. M Rishel)

The Santa Fe Railroad, in early days, changed their survey from following the route of the old Santa Fe Trail to the present route through Canton, Galva, McPherson and west of Ellinwood. The work through the Canton, Galva, and on through this area was done in the summer months of 1879. My nephew Lester Phillis, a grandson of Jonathan K. Wilson, who lived all his Kansas life except after he retired and moved into Galva, on his farm where he took his homestead when he came to Kansas in 1873, 1 1/4 miles east of Galva. The Santa Fe survey came along the north edge of his farm, so during the summer months of 1879, he contracted with the construction workers to furnish meals for them. My wife's nephew, Lester Phillis, a grandson of my wife's father, has a copy of the contract his grandfather made with the railroad construction crew to furnish those meals, the big sum of 20 cents each, the months of June, July and August, 1879.

Ralph Hathaway

Ralph Hathaway, owner and keeper of Ralph's Ruts, recently suffered a stroke. So far there has been no permanent damage. Ralph is a Quivira Chapter life member as well as a charter and life member of the SFTA. Ralph is 94 years young and would enjoy hearing from Chapter members. His address is:

Good Samaritan Center
Room 403
1311 S. Douglas
Lyons, KS 67554

Please join us in wishing him well.

QUIVIRA CHAPTER, SFTA

President Linda Colle
724 Penn Drive
McPherson, KS 67460

We're on the Web!
SantaFeTrail.org