

Memories from yesteryear

The Settling of Stevens County

Everything seemed to be going from bad to worse after the trial at Paris. The people of Stevens County were still on opposite sides, and hard feelings were apparent. All those who took sides endangered their own lives and the lives of their families. Stevens County was not a place for raising a family or even living at that time. So, in the fall of 1890, Mr. Trent and I sold the bank, the lot the bank was on and the corner lot adjoining on the north, my residence on the avenue, and some deeded and school land to J. W. Newcomb of Wichita who claimed to have one hundred head of whitefaced steers and as good a home as there was in Wichita. The home part I knew, for I was in it.

The spring of 1891, our household goods were shipped from Hugoton to Eldorado. In June, Mrs. James and I were subpoenaed to go to Hugoton as witnesses on a federal case. We arrived in Hugoton June 22, 1891, in time for court

that day.

JUNE 23, 1891—Court convened and soon adjourned for the preliminaries. Sam Wood had been subpoenaed on his arson case as previously he had written to farmer friends living east of Hugoton to go to Hugoton and burn the town on a certain day when all the people were at a horse show a mile away. These two men afterward fell out with Sam, then they brought the letter in and gave it to W. O’Conner the prosecuting attorney. He brought suit against Wood.

Sam came in a buggy with Mrs. Wood and Mrs. Carpenter on each side of him so that no one could shoot him without killing a woman as they came through the sandhills.

Mr. Humphrey and I were still in the courtroom talking when Wood came in and leafed over the dockets. He stayed a few minutes and then started to return to the buggy. He passed Jim Brennan, who was loafing in the doorway, and went out the door. Two or three reports from a revolver rang out clearly; all that was in the

room rushed out to see what was going on. Mrs Carpenter was yelling, “Oh, they have killed Colonel Wood.” Mrs. Wood was screaming and running after her husband.

After Colonel Wood received the bullets, he ran along the side and the end of the church or courthouse and fell dead, his wife hovering over him as she had followed him as he tried to escape the shots.

Mr. Humphrey and I decided it wasn’t any place for us so we started for town. There was Sheriff Cann trying to arrest Jim, revolver in hand but not raised yet. Brennan had his two self-cocking revolvers up and pointing at Cann, saying, “If you raise that gun you are a dead man.” Cann could have killed Brennan, but he would have died too, and he knew it so he used good judgment by not raising his gun or shooting.

The stalemate went on for a few minutes, Cann advancing toward Brennan saying, “You have killed Sam Wood and must be arrested.” Jim Brennan replying, “I killed him and I am proud of

it, but no man (with a big oath) can live and take me with a gun in his hand.”

Jim Brennan was deputy sheriff of Morton County, and about this time his own sheriff came up and pulled off his belt containing his revolvers and threw them down on the ground and walked up to Jim Brennan and asked him to surrender. Jim said, “Alright, but no G..D.. man can take me with a revolver in hand and live.” The Morton County sheriff turned Brennan over to Mr. Aurell, the constable.

All of the south side men seemed to be glad to see Wood dead, and all the north side men were ready to fight because he had been killed. We realized the situation was a powder keg ready to go off so we bulled for Liberal as fast as we could and then back to Eldorado.

Sheriff Cann took Brennan to Liberal and from there east to another county seat so no harm could come to him. As they went to and from Liberal to Jim’s trial, no one dared attack Cann and Jim for they were both crack shots and well armed. The



Main Street in Hugoton. Taken from Stevens County and Its People, published in 1979.

court tried for days and could not get an impartial jury for all north and south side men had made up their minds so again a man who had killed went free.

Years afterward, when Wood’s little boy grew to be a man, he made an effort to bring Jim Brennan back from Oklahoma and have him tried for the old offense. But even after all those years, the old feelings were still there, and the south side Stevens County men still protested so much that the state of Oklahoma refused to give him up. He died a natural death in Oklahoma.

ROBERT O. JAMES

This history of Stevens County from 1886 to 1891 was written by Mr. James. He and his partner, Mr. Trent, opened the first bank in Hugoton, and in this history he relates his own personal experiences at the time of the Stevens County War. He lived in the county when it became known as ‘Bloody Stevens.’” Much of his history is from personal knowledge.

Taken from Stevens County and Its People, published in 1979.

History from the Hermes

by Lori Walters



These community supporters gathered at the Senior Center to publicly declare May 31, 1995 as National Senior Health and Fitness Day. Mayor Neal Gillespie made it official by signing a Proclamation. Seated left to right are Brad

Musgrove, Mayor Neal Gillespie and Paula Rowden. Standing are Kevin Watkins, Linda Walter and Faye DeWitt. Taken from The Hugoton Hermes, May 18, 1995 edition.

Thursday, May 20, 2010

Lance Corporal Parker Odell, a 2007 Hugoton High School graduate, has been deployed to Afghanistan. He joined the Marine Corps in 2007 and is in the infantry. In 2008, he served the tour of duty in Iraq and has also been stationed in Hawaii. Lance Corporal Odell is the son of Loren Odell and the

late Natalie Odell. He is the grandson of Eddie and Connie Kerbow, Lana Slocum and Marvin Odell.

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Gage LeNeve, Hugoton, a December 2004 Drafting Technology graduate of Southwest Kansas Technical School in Liberal, competed in the Kansas SkillsUSA Skills Championship in Wichita.

The Technical Drafting contest which included a three-hour Computer-Aided-Drafting problem and a one-hour written test. Gage’s combined scores placed him in third and winning a bronze medal.

Thursday, May 11, 2000

Veronica Bansemer is going to London, England to play at Wimbledon Tennis

Courts. This dream come true evolved after Veronica competed at the State tennis tournament and as only a sophomore placed in the top ten. She is the daughter of Cindy Bansemer and the granddaughter of Vic and Evelyn Bansemer.

Thursday, May 25, 1995

Carol Swinney has been selected to receive the national “Rural Teacher of the Year” award. She will receive plane tickets to attend the convention in Seattle with expenses paid and \$500 spending money. Also a grant of \$3,000 will be awarded to Hugoton High School for technology upgrades and expansion.

Thursday, May 17, 1990

Rob Bentz is one of two young men from Kansas selected to attend West Point for 1990, the 100th anniversary of the birth of Kansas’ most famous West Point graduate-Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Thursday, May 21, 1970

Kansas Boy’s State and Sunflower Girls’ State will be at the University of Kansas, June 7-13. The Stevens County delegates who will be attending are Rhonda Holt, Timmy Webb and Steve Palmgren of Moscow and Kim Harper, Danny Popejoy, Frank Wolf, Chris Concannon and David Thompson all from Hugoton.

Mrs. Roma Swan, a third grade instructor in the Hugoton Elementary School will retire after teaching for 46 years. She taught all eight grades in the country schools in Seward and Stevens counties including Lone Star, Bethel and Pleasant View before she came to Hugoton Elementary.

Thursday, May 6, 1965

Dick Harris was elected president of the Hugoton Jaycees. He succeeds Don Crane. Other officers are Eddie Chance, first vice president; Darrell Littell, second vice president; Don Rogers, secretary; and Bobby Espenosa, treasurer. Charles Schroeder was elected to the open position on the board of directors.

Thursday, May 19, 1955

Joann McClung, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. F. McClung, and Gayle Parsons, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ira Parsons, will both graduate from Colorado Woman’s College in Denver.

Thursday, May 18, 1945

The Argus Natural Gas Company is announcing a change is being made in the name of the company operating in Kansas to Peoples Natural Gas.

If any readers have pictures or memories for the history page of the Hermes, please bring them in to the staff at The Hugoton Hermes newspaper.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

(First published in The Hugoton Hermes, Thursday, May 8, 2025) 3t

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF STEVENS COUNTY, KANSAS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF MARGARET MASON, DECEASED

Case No. SV-2025-PR-000022

NOTICE OF HEARING
(Chapter 59)

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are hereby notified that a petition has been filed in the above Court on May 1, 2025, by Sherri L. Sheppard, daughter of the decedent, Margaret Mason, praying for the determination of descent of the real estate as more fully described in the petition, and all other property, both real estate and

personal property, or interests therein, including mineral interests, owned by Margaret Mason within the State of Kansas at the time of her death on June 27, 2023.

You are hereby required to file your written defenses thereto on or before the 30th day of May, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. of said day, in the district courtroom at the county courthouse, in the City of Hugoton, Stevens County, Kansas, at which time and place the cause will be heard. Should you fail therein, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon the petition.

Sherri L. Sheppard,
Petitioner

KRAMER, NORDLING & NORDLING, LLC
209 East 6th Street
Hugoton, KS 67951
Telephone: 620-544-4333
Attorneys for Petitioner

Museum Update



Does anyone know when this photo was taken? How about who these lovely ladies are and what special occasion was taking place? If so, please call The Hermes to let us know. Many more photographs like this one are displayed at the museum for you to enjoy. The Stevens County Gas and Historical Museum is open

Monday through Friday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. The museum is now open Saturdays and closed Sundays. Reservations for tours by Curator Steve Lewis can be arranged for other hours. Call 620-544-9650 to reserve a tour. Summer hours will start soon.



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