

## Memories from yesteryear

### Speakin' Western Lingo

By Ken Miller

Southwest of Dodge City, Kansas, where I grew up, the English language acquired some unique dialect regarding the earliest settlers and their descendants. To this day, generations raised in this geographical area often reflect the idiosyncrasies of this abridged form of the English language.

My father Ray and his twin brother Roy were masters of the language having evolved from the linguistics of the Old West. One example interchanges the "long i" vowel with an "r controlled a" vowel as in the words tired and fire. Examples: "Gosh I'm tared, let's set by the far" English version: "I'm really tired, let's sit by the fire." (Also note the word sit pronounced set.) Another example of an "r" sound misused as in the word Wash: "Warsh your clothes". Frequently, negatives are verbalized, insinuating a positive communication as stated in, "I'm takin' my whole bunch t'town, we're goin' t'see if we can't scare up somethin' t'eat." English version: "I'm taking my family to the café in town for a good

meal." The language described in this informative story also dictates the use of eliminating the word "would" by simply adding a "d" to the associated noun. The following is an example of this technique: "Then the teacher'd get up and say, John was the most misunderstood man in the country!" Two other common practices include bypassing the word "to", instead, using a shortcut and in other English vocabulary, dropping the letter "g" in words ending with "ing". "He's just bein' nice so don't start talkin' purty t'em!"

Another interesting quirk of the language is the use of grammar combined with what is sometimes, in western lingo, called "word averaging." A good example of this is, "Have you eaten yet?" A so called, western proper vernacular is, "Did you eat yet?" However, with word averaging, this question is shortened to, "G'eat yet?" while in areas of northern Kansas, "Have you eaten yet?" becomes, "Y'eat yet?" An answer in the affirmative using the western lingo is, "Yeah, gew?" (Yes, did you?), while a negative answer is,

"No, gew?" (No, did you?)

If a westerner wants an object placed in the bed of a pickup truck or wagon, he, more than likely, uses the word throw. However, in Southwest vernacular, throw infers varying interpretations regarding the intended object. For instance, common sense tells one a bundle of feed is thrown, a bucket of water placed, a cement block laid, and a board slid into the designated area. In other words, applied common sense is used to enhance effective communication.

Language experts claim if a society is isolated for one hundred years or more, a new language progresses. Indeed, such was and remains to be the case for many descendants of early, western Kansas pioneers. Combining the distinct techniques of this language along with other aspects of the dialogue can be very confusing as well as intriguing, to say the very least, to a "greenhorn" listener or foreigner.

Auntie Miller, Uncle Roy's wife, enlightened me concerning one of their family trips to Minnesota in the 1940's. With a beam on Auntie's face, she shared an

instance where some neighbors to her sister and brother-in-law in the town of Willmar, Minnesota, were utterly enthralled with Uncle Roy Miller's accent and willingly stayed up late visiting with him, absorbed in the conversation, largely because they loved to be entertained by his western dialect. My English changed after four years of college with professors and students from other fragments of the country and from having lived and taught in various parts of the state. Every time I return to my roots, though, it takes only a few minutes to pick up on the dialect and converse as if I had never left.

Yet, when visiting different areas of Kansas and other countries of the world, I occasionally feel uncomfortable when speaking this western lingo. My brother, George, moved to Sweden twenty years ago where many natives pride themselves speaking proficient English. When communicating with the Swedes, he and I sometimes have fun reverting to an exaggerated example of Western English. Even some of the very skilled Eng-

lish linguists appear clueless regarding our conversation, looking at us like, "What did you just say?" (There were times nobody'd ever question what I wuz tryin' t' say, but other times I'd find myself tryin' t' thinka' jus' the right words 'n bent on pronounce'n 'm, usin' purcise English.)

I'm a 1963 graduate of Moscow High School, Moscow, Kansas and grew up

with the Hermes.

My family has been living in Stevens County since 1886. I am the fourth generation of Millers there.

This is a story from a book I have written but not published yet.

A big Thank You to Mr. Ken Miller for sharing these articles with The Hermes and all of our readers!



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## History from the Hermes

by Lori Walters

### Thursday, June 18, 2020

92nd Annual Kansas FFA Convention was May 27-29, 2020. Students from Hugoton that earned awards were Jacob Bell - State winner in Poultry Production and State Star Candidate in Agriculture Production; Luis Ramos - State Star Candidate in Agriculture Placement; and Megan Newlon - State winner for the Horse Production Proficiency Award.

### Thursday, June 17, 2010

The 2010 Hugoton Dust Bowl Riders Motorcycle Club Bike Run hosted about 160 bikes and over 200 poker hands were sold. Several vendors came from as far away as Lubbock, Tx.

### Thursday, June 16, 2005

Alta Pettis is a Hometown Hospice Volunteer and was named Hospice Volunteer of the Year 2004 by St. Catherine's Hospice Program in Garden City. For the past few years, Alta has answered the call for help with hospice patients and families many times, doing whatever needed to be done.

### Thursday, June 15, 2000

Detra Wolters, daughter of Richard and Kathy Wolters of Hugoton, was honored at a special ceremony with the R. Curtis Smith Award at Mid America Nazarene University. Detra graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.

### Thursday, June 22, 1995

The construction of the new Hugoton Sonic on Highway 51 is progressing nicely. It is hoped to open for business in July.

### Thursday, June 7, 1990

"God was certainly riding along in his cab" was stated by an observer at Rex Coulter's accident scene Wednesday. The Stevens County farmer was approaching a railroad track at Feterita when a train caught the corner of his thirty foot drill. It broke the 4640 John Deere tractor in half, crushed the cab, and mangled everything into a ball. Amazingly, Coulter suffered not a scratch and appeared to have escaped without suffering shock as well.

### Thursday, June 13, 1985

The first load of wheat harvested in Stevens County arrived at the Hugoton Collingwood grain elevator June 7, 1985. Wilmer J. Perry combined the wheat on land owned by his son Steve. This load contained 25 bushels.

### Thursday, June 19, 1980

Mike Wing was named the 1980 Kansas High School Rodeo Association All-Around Cowboy at the State Rodeo Finals in Topeka. Bruce Norton, another Hugoton cowboy finished eighth in steer wrestling in the Kansas State Finals.

### Thursday, June 19, 1975

Parsons Grain Company will celebrate their thirtieth anniversary in business in Hugoton. Brothers B. W. and J. R. Parsons began the business in 1945.

### Thursday, June 19, 1975

The Gas Capital Jaycees hosted their annual Awards Banquet at the Argus dining room. This year's ten-year awards went to Charlie Schroeder, Jr. Guerrero and



Hallie Wettstein of the Hugoton FFA Chapter receives a \$2,000 scholarship awarded by the National FFA Organization. The scholarship is sponsored by American Implement and John Deere. Taken from the June 18, 2020 edition of The Hugoton Hermes.

### Dennis DeWitt.

Happiness Is...has moved to its new location and Sally Johnson just loves the new facilities at 402 W. Eleventh Street.

### Thursday, June 25, 1970

Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Dummer have now opened their new Daylight Donut Shop for business. The shop is at 608 S. Main in downtown Hugoton.

### Thursday, June 16, 1960

Claude Edward Rich, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Rich, enlisted in the Navy, June 8, as Seaman Recruit. He was sent to San Diego, Ca., for his nine week recruitment training. Claude attended Hugoton High School and took part in all sports.

W.T "Bud" French filed as a candidate for Sheriff of Stevens County. Bud has been a resident of Stevens County since 1918 and has lived in Hugoton the past 20 years.

### Thursday, June 16, 1955

Shooting an 89, Betty

Sturdy won the Hugoton Country Club's third annual women's invitational golf tournament by three strokes

### Thursday, June 16, 1950

Senior Scouts, Larry Lightcap, David Parsley, Robert McClung, Paul Bennett and Robert Wetzel will become Eagle Scouts at a dinner to take place at the Vet's Hall, June 19, 1950.

### Thursday, June 8, 1945

Howard Gracey is the new superintendent of the Hugoton Light and Water Plant as of June 1.

### Thursday, June 14, 1940

Leo Betsworth, marshal of Hugoton, states he has been receiving a lot of complaints from citizens, relative to a lot of damage being done to gardens, lawns and shrubbery by livestock - cows, hogs, dogs, chickens and other animals - running loose within city limits. Leo wishes to warn owners to keep them penned up or he will be forced to take lawful means of protecting citizens from further damage.

### Thursday, June 12, 1890

Campaign Echoes  
We are still alive after eight days of hard wind.

### Thursday, June 15, 1895

A hailstorm accompanied the rain Tuesday evening with hailstones falling as large as turkey eggs.

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.

## Hugoton High School Alumni Chatter



FFA members, pictured left to right are Donald Munn, Gene Moore, Roger Beesley, Sherman Overbay, Kyle Gooch president, Mr. Zabel Instructor, Will Martin, Gale Overbay, David Rome, Melvin Towner, Tom Martin vice president, Terry Jordan, Vincent Knox. From top

to bottom is Jill Nix, Cindy Leonard, Cary Gooch, Glen Brower, Kay Hollenback, Rick Mantzke, Pam Forward, Donna Suddeth, Ed Anderson, Kim Jordan secretary, Mark Forward, Tonnie Throw and Tony Martin. Not shown is Donnie Knier treasurer. Taken from 1978 Eagle yearbook.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

(First published in The Hugoton Hermes, Thursday, June 19, 2025) 2t

Notice of Neighborhood Revitalization Plan Hearing

The Board of Commissioners of Stevens County, Kansas (the "Governing Body") will consider the adoption of a Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, pursuant to K.S.A. 12-17.114 et seq., at a public hearing at 8:00 a.m., or as soon thereafter as may be heard, on June 30, 2025, in the County Commission Board Room at the County Courthouse, 200 E. 6th, Hugoton, Kansas 67951.

The proposed Neighborhood Revitalization Plan and a description of the boundaries of the proposed area included in such Plan are available for inspection during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the office of the County Clerk, County Courthouse, 200 E. 6th.

Hugoton, Kansas 67951.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the Governing Body will consider a resolution for the adoption of the proposed Neighborhood Revitalization Plan and the establishment of the area included in such Plan, as provided for in K.S.A. 12-17.114 et seq.

The County Clerk shall cause a copy of this notice to be delivered to the other taxing entities within Stevens County, Kansas.

The County Clerk shall cause this notice to be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the County at least once each week for two consecutive weeks before the hearing.

/s/ Amy Jo Tharp  
County Clerk

## PUBLIC NOTICE

(First published in The Hugoton Hermes, Thursday, June 19, 2025) 3t

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF STEVENS COUNTY, KANSAS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF LUCILLE BETH REILLER, DECEASED

Case No. SV-2025-PR-000029

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 June 3, 2025, by Alan J. Wertjes, attorney and administrator of the estate of the decedent in the Superior Court of Thurston County, Washington, praying for the determination of descent of the real estate as more fully described in the petition, and all other property, both

Alan J. Wertjes,  
Petitioner

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

## PUBLIC NOTICE

(First published in The Hugoton Hermes, Thursday, June 5, 2025) 3t

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF STEVENS COUNTY, KANSAS

(Pursuant to K.S.A. Chapter 59)

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF DONNA JOAN COLLISON, DECEASED.

Case No. SV-2025-PR-000028

NOTICE OF HEARING

THE STATE OF KANSAS, TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are notified that a Petition has been filed in this Court by Brooke B. Collison, as the surviving spouse and an heir of Donna Joan Collison, deceased, requesting:

Descent be determined of the following described real estate situated in Stevens County, Kansas:

40 Mineral Acres in and under: The Southwest Quarter (SW/4) of Section Eleven (11), Township Thirty-five (35), Range Thirty-six (36), Stevens County, Kansas.

and all personal property and other Kansas real estate owned by decedent at the time of death. And that said property and all personal property and other Kansas real estate owned by the decedent at the time of death be assigned pursuant to the laws of intestate succession.

You are required to file your written defenses to the Petition on or before July 10, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., in the city of Hugoton in Stevens County, Kansas, at which time and place the cause will be heard. Should you fail to file your written defenses, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon the petition.

Brooke B. Collison  
Petitioner

Arlyn Miller  
MARTINDELL SWEARER SHAFFER RIDENOUR LLP  
20 Compound Drive  
Hutchinson, KS 67502  
(620) 662-3331  
arlyn.miller@martindell.com  
Attorneys for Petitioner

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