

Booklet to tell stories of local settlers

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Bird City is a town with many of the early settler's descendants still living on the land, or moved to town with crops still being raised on the old homestead. The older generation is slowly slipping away and lots of history is being lost.

The Bird City Historical Association, is working on putting together a Historical Booklet entitled, "Stewards of the Land". They are mainly interested in those homesteads where there are family members still living on the land. Many of those homesteaders still own the land but, have left the country home and moved to town. They have lots of stories to tell about life on the old homestead.

In conjunction to a suggestion, Norma Martinez, Times editor, has plans to interview some of these families and publish their stories in the newspaper. By participating in this, it might be a starting point in jogging old memories and stirring up the fire for the historical ladies' project. It will also allow the readers who are not acquainted with some of these families an opportunity to know more about them.

Hollis DaPron

Hollis (Murry) DaPron was born, May 24, 1932, in the house homesteaded in Cheyenne County in 1892 by Lyman L. Pitcher. Hollis' grandfather bought it in 1926. Her father John Murry purchased the house in 1945.

Hollis' father, John Edward Murray, was born June 5, 1905, in Smith County and lived in Franklin, Neb. Her mother, Eva Ann (Pyle) Murray was born, Feb. 6, 1909, in Big Timber, Neb. They were married on March 15, 1930.

On June 23, 1959, Hollis married John Richard DaPron in Bird City. He was born Dec. 30, 1924, in Glendo, Wyo.

After their marriage they lived in the house 6 miles south of Bird City that Hollis was born in. They had three children; Duane Dean, born in St. Francis in 1957, Donita (DaPron) Clausen, born in 1960, and Darwin John, born in 1961. Both were born in Larned. All three were partially raised in the same house that Hollis was born in.

Hollis and her sister, Elaine Lucille Kogl, who is two years younger than her, attended Mt. Pleasant 31, a one-room schoolhouse where the teacher taught 20 students in grades one - eight. They were more fortunate than most of the other students as back then there were no rural buses to take children to school, everyone had to walk to school, regardless as to the weather, and this school was only one mile away from their home. During high school she and her sister attended Bird City Rural High School.

Hollis did not graduate from high school but got her General Educational Development (GED) in 1980. Both she and John worked as the custodians at Cheylin Elementary and High School for 32 years. Folks who know them

say they were the best custodians they had up to that time.

In growing up on the farm, Hollis, had several chores to attend to before and after school: milking the cows, tending the chickens, hogs and stock cattle, and taking care of the garden. The ones she hated the most was the chickens, as the rooster used to chase both her and her sister, and they always had to carry a stick to keep them away.

Hollis was a "tom boy" at heart, and she didn't mind harvest time as, she would get to drive the tractor during wheat cutting time. Someone else would follow the tractor with the horse driven binder. The wheat stocks would be cut and bound together and left standing upright in the fields and left to dry. It had to be left standing up for if it rained it would dry faster and better.

The time she laughs about as she tells it now, but wasn't so funny at the time, is when she decided it would be fun to see if she could climb up to the top of the windmill. She got half the way up and her dad caught her. She knew she was in real bad trouble, and, when he told her to come down, she didn't want to, as she just knew she was going to get a spanking, and she says, "I did!"

In school she was very good in track, and at the track meets got all first and second place ribbons, in broad jump, running, and softball throw.

Softball and baseball were the only other sports they played. Once a month they would play against another school. Most of the time they would choose up their teams, and most of the time she was the pitcher.

Winters were lots of snow, and it was very cold and windy. We used coal and cobs for heat, and later we upgraded to kerosene. Mom always kept papers on the floor around it, to keep the coal from getting the floor all black. I remember one time when my sister and I threw some papers in the fire, she said. Before we closed the lid, one fell out on the floor, we thought, "Oh! No!" "We stomped on it, to get the fire out before Mom got there." They had to change the papers on the floor. First thing mom asked was, "Why there were new papers on the floor?"

Hollis remembers having two tornadoes hit close to the house, and remembers the date, May 3, 1944, and May 5, 1977. The first one hit 1-mile south of the farm. It didn't do much damage to the house but it took their grain bin and pushed it up against the house. It was Memorial Day and they were at the neighbors, so they were all in the basement of their neighbor's house. "We were all scared," she said. "It sounded like a big roar and lasted for a half to an hour. When the roaring stopped they figured it was safe to come out. It was pitch dark black, because it was night. The neighbors lost the roof of a machine shed and part of their barn.

When the second one hit, John and Hollis and the three children



A PART OF HER past, Hollis DaPron holds a doll that was given to her on Christmas when she was growing up. The other is a Shirley Temple that she just had to have.

Times staff photo by Norma Martinez

had moved to town and her folks were in the house. It took our metal bin and the wood bin tops off. The next day, they had to get rid of the grain. All the machinery including the plow, one way, drill and disc, were in the road and some of it was beyond repair. Luckily it didn't go near the tractor, she said.

Wintertime was lots of time for sewing, and Hollis' mom tried teaching her how to quilt. I can't do that, she said. I'm not good enough, but she did do a lot of embroidering. Being a tom boy at heart she wanted to be outside. She loved to go fishing at South Beaver, and around Trenton at the lake.

Holidays were always looked forward to. Fourth of July they were always busy with harvesting, so they just had cake and homemade ice cream to celebrate.

Christmas was lots of fun with family and friends, except the presents, she said, "We only got one present, that's all our parents could afford," My very last Christmas gift was the one I wanted the most - my doll. I still have it today."

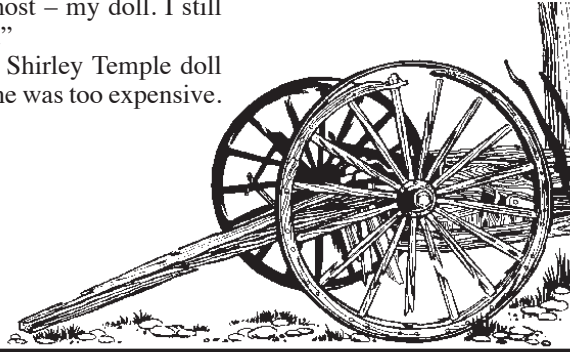
I wanted a Shirley Temple doll so bad, and she was too expensive.

After my children were grown, I saw one and bought it, and my daughter asked, "Why did you do that?" and I told her I never got one, so I bought my own.

My great-great uncle, George W. Norris was a Nebraska U.S. senator and lived in McCook. He had a big library and I loved to read. One day I was in his library looking through his books and Mom caught me. She scolded me for touching them. He told her, "You leave her alone, she likes books and by reading she will be something some day."

Son, Darwin still lives in the old homestead house that four generations of Murray's have lived in. Grandpa Charley Murray bought it with three-quarters of ground for \$11,500, she said. The only changes that have been made have been remodeling to update the rooms.

The DaProns have five grandchildren: Danielle (Clausen) Kingsbury, John Clausen, Tina Clausen, Danny DaPron, and Lynette DaPron (deceased).



BEV HIGGINS was the only November birthday celebrant. Several others brought cakes to assure everyone they would have plenty-of cake.

Veterans are focus of agricultural program

Are you a veteran with an interest in farming or ranching? If so, please make plans to participate in an online Beginning Farmer training session on Friday, Nov. 16, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

You can participate from anywhere in the world by connecting to this website: www.connect.cis.ksu.edu/veteranfarmer/

You will receive information on funding, program availability as well as contact information regarding resources for related benefits.

Topics to be discussed include

- but are not limited to:
- Access to credit
- Program availability
- Additional benefits
- Live question and answer session

This online Webinar is a joint project hosted by the Center for Rural Affairs, Farmer-Veterans Coalition, Farmers Union, AgrAbility and USDA/FSA.

For more information, visit www.cfra.org/veteran_farmers_project or call 402-617-7946 or any other phone numbers listed on the website.

Run scheduled along with county health fair

Runners and walkers are urged to be at the St. Francis high school on College Street at 10 a.m. on Saturday. In conjunction with the Cheyenne County Hospital Health Fair, the St. Francis United Methodist Church will sponsor a 5K run and a 2-mile walk. The race will begin and end at the high school.

Medals will be awarded for the first three places in each age category for the run. There will not be medals for the walk.

Each participant will receive a T-shirt. There will be refreshments as well as drawings for door prizes.

The top two door prizes will be a turkey and a ham.

The run is being held as a reminder for people to care about their health even during the holidays and to take time to exercise on a regular basis. Regular check ups, good eating and sleeping habits, and exercise are vital for good health.

If anyone is interested in registering or volunteering to help with the race, call Warren Cico at 772-7098 or stop by the St. Francis United Methodist Church Education building on Webster Street.

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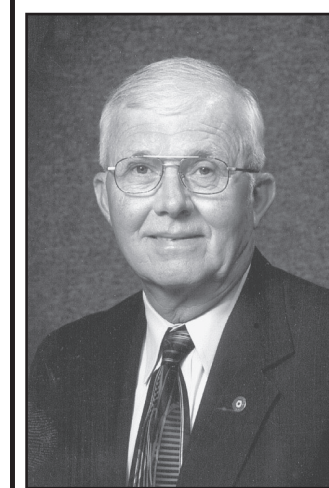
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THANKS



I would like to thank everyone for your support in the general election. Your positive comments and phone calls continue to encourage me. I look forward to your continued support during the legislative session and beyond.

Senator Ralph Ostmeyer, Kansas 40th District

Pol. Adv. paid for by Ostmeyer for Senate, Lori Edwards, Treasurer



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After Church Soup and Sandwich Luncheon at Good Samaritan Village
Sunday, Nov. 18 • 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
You will have an opportunity to purchase your Holiday Pies!
Free-Will Offering
Proceeds go to renovate the West Main Entrance
Volunteer support and supplemental funding is being provided by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

Thank You

I appreciate your votes and loyalty. It is greatly appreciated!

Delores Jenik

Pol Adv pd for by Delores Jenik

Senior Financial Officer Needed

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Northwest Tech
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Goodland, KS 67735
OR EMAIL: sherri.knitig@nwktc.edu. E.O.E.



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