

A famous black settler in early rural Kansas

By Ron Wilson

Two teams take the field for a six-man high school football game. The quarterback looks across the field and sees something he's never seen before: A young black man playing for the other school's team. The quarterback thought to himself, "How did a black kid get out here in the middle of Kansas?" That question remained in the back of his mind for many years. It ultimately led to a research project and the creation of a book about the little-known black settlers of this region of Kansas. And it's the subject of today's Kansas Profile.

Jim Sharp is the author of an interesting book titled "Black Settlers on the Kaw Indian Reservation." Jim was the quarterback of the White City high school football team in 1942

when his school played the team from Dunlap. To Jim's surprise, the Dunlap team included a black player.

Jim went on to study business and history at K-State and then had a career with Kansas Farm Bureau.

In 1975, Jim and his wife joined the Morris County Historical Society. In the process, Jim asked about how this young black man had come to be in high school at Dunlap back when he played football. The Morris County folks knew there had been some black families living in the region, but they asked Jim to research the topic in more depth.

"It turned out to be much more than a black farmer or two," Jim said. "It's about the whole history of Morris County, Indian relocation, and black resettlement from the south."

At the heart of the story is a man known as Benjamin "Pap" Singleton. "I studied history in college, but before I did my research, I had never heard of Pap Singleton," Jim said. "Now I believe he is the most significant black man in Kansas history."

Benjamin "Pap" Singleton was a former slave in Tennessee who escaped to freedom on the Underground Railroad. When southern landowners refused to sell cropland to freed blacks at competitive prices, Singleton encouraged the black families to move to Kansas. Singleton's sister had moved to Kansas with her husband and settled southwest of Council Grove, among the Kaw Indians.

Under an 1846 treaty, the Kaw Indian tribe was located in the Neosho River Valley of Kansas.

Twenty-seven years later, they were moved to Oklahoma by another treaty.

This tragic relocation of the Kaw Indians created an opportunity for black families and others to buy land on the former reservation. Pap Singleton preached to black freedmen in Tennessee and Kentucky that they should come to Kansas. For example, "Ho for Kansas!" was the headline of one poster shown in the book.

Many people followed the call. Some 500 black families, including Singleton, ultimately moved to Kansas and settled in and around the town of Dunlap and bought thousands of acres. One settlement was called the Singleton Colony.

The first black immigrants had been advised by Pap Singleton to come with adequate

resources to buy land and build homes, and things went well for them. But when word of their success got back to the south, many others made the migration - and many of those were unprepared and could not make it in the new location.

In 1880, the U.S. Senate had a hearing on the "Negro Exodus from the Southern States." Among those called to testify was Pap Singleton of Dunlap - which today has a population of 82 people. Now, that's rural.

Singleton died in 1883. Over time, the population of the region dwindled and black families went various ways. By the 1970s, the black population was virtually gone. This chapter of Kansas history would have disappeared, if not for the inquiring mind and persistent research of Jim Sharp.

The book "Black Settlers on the Kaw Indian Reservation" is available on Amazon.com or call 785-539-8582. Copies have sold from California to Washington, D.C.

The high school football game is over. Jim Sharp leaves the field along with the first black man he had ever seen. That chance encounter would lead to this book which makes a difference by capturing an interesting and little-known element of Kansas history. It was a good game.

Audio and text files of Kansas Profiles are available at <http://www.kansasprofile.com>. For more information about the Huck Boyd Institute, interested persons can visit <http://www.huckboydinstitute.org>.

Play it safe during practice in the heat

As the state continues to experience record-high temperatures, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) wants to encourage state school administrators, activity directors and coaches to be extremely cautious and monitor the health of their students.

Kansas Department of Health and Environment recently contacted the Kansas State High School Activities Association to stress the importance of staying safe during hot weather, not just

during excessive heat warnings.

"No one wants harm to come to our children, but sometimes we may overlook the warning signs," said Tom Langer, Director of Bureau of Environmental Health. "We are especially concerned that even as the temperatures decline out of triple-digit readings that the combination of temperature, relative humidity and exposure to the sun's rays can negatively affect everyone's health, especially student athletes and anyone participating

in outdoor activities."

Heat is the number one weather-related killer in the United States and heat illness is the leading cause of preventable death in high school athletics. Other states have already seen student athletes die due to heat exhaustion. Before sending your child or player outside, keep these safety tips in mind:

- Make sure students drink fluids (water or sports drink) at least 30 minutes before the activity begins and every 15-20

minutes during activity.

- Have them wear light-colored, breathable clothing.

- Know the symptoms of heat-related illnesses, like heat rash, sunburns, heat cramps and heat exhaustion. More info at www.kdheks.gov/beh/extreme_heat.htm.

More tips on heat safety for students, as well Kansas Department of Health and Environment's letter sent to the Kansas State High School Activities Association, are attached.

Poker run to be held for a cancer patient

The Cheyenne County Cruisers will hold a poker run open to all types of vehicles on Sunday, Oct. 2, starting at 1:30 p.m. at the city park in downtown St. Francis. All proceeds will go to benefit Linda Elfers, who was recently diagnosed with cancer.

Participants are asked to arrive by 1 p.m. to get the instructions and draw the first card. There is a \$20 charge which includes the poker hand and meal after the run. Extra meals are an additional charge.

The route is from St. Francis,

to Wray, Colo., then on to Haigler, Benkelman, Bird City and back to St. Francis, approximately 125 miles.

Those under the age of 18 will need a parent or guardian signature on the release form.

People who do not want to participate on the run can make a donation to Mrs. Elfers through the Cruisers Club.

A rain date has been set for Oct. 9, same time and place. For more information, contact Kent Kechter, 785-332-0039 or Scott Schultz, 785-332-3960.

Midwest Hearing opens eight new clinics in Kansas

Midwest Hearing Aids has opened 8 Dizziness and Balance Centers in the following locations: Andover, Chanute, Dodge City, Great Bend, Liberal, Newton, Salina and Winfield.

"This is unheard of. Nobody that I know in the United States even comes close to this accomplishment," says Brandon Sawalich, Senior Vice President of Sales, Marketing and Customer Relations with Starkey Laboratories, Minneapolis, Minnesota, the world's largest manufacturer of custom-made hearing aids. Mr. Sawalich went on to say that "Midwest Hearing Aids has seen the valuable need in rural Kansas for this undeserved population." Mike

Keeler, COO of the Newton Medical Center, stated, "The Newton Medical Board identified a need for a Dizziness and Balance Center for the Newton Medical Center several years ago and they are very pleased that Midwest Hearing Aids has chosen the Newton Medical Center as one of their Dizziness and Balance Centers."

According to the National Institutes for Health, 90 million Americans, or 42% of the population, will complain about dizziness or balance problems to their doctor during their lifetime. About 40% of Americans age 40 and older actually have balance problems. As for the older population, problems with

balance can affect their quality of life.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than a third of people age 65 and up fall each year. Balance-related falls account for more than one-half of accidental deaths among the elderly, according to a 2009 article in an American Medical Association Journal.

"We, at Midwest Hearing Aids, are fortunate to have the staff and knowledge to provide our patients with quality care for their hearing, dizziness, and balance needs," stated Terry Brewster, President of Midwest Hearing Aids.

About Midwest Hearing Aids

Midwest Hearing Aids has been serving the hearing needs of Kansans since 1948 and they are the largest hearing aid company in Kansas with 37 offices statewide.

Please visit the website at www.midwesthearingaids.com.

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Radio Disney fun teams up with carseat safety week in Hays next week

The Kansas Department of Transportation and Radio Disney invite kids, parents and caregivers to come and enjoy fun and prizes while learning about children's car seats during Child Passenger Safety Week, September 18-24.

Radio Disney will host events full of games, music, giveaways and prizes, including a chance to win Phineas and Ferb prize packs, valued at \$50 each! The excitement will occur at the following locations and dates:

Indian Springs Mall, Kansas City Sept. 17, 10:30am-12pm
Meadowbrook Mall, Pittsburg Sept. 18, 1pm-2:30pm
Exploration Place, Wichita Sept. 24, 10am-11:30am
Kansas Cosmosphere, Hutchinson Sept. 24, 5:30pm-7pm
The Mall at Hays, Hays Sept.

25, 1pm-2:30pm

KDOT and Radio Disney are passionate about the importance of child passenger safety. In motor vehicle crashes, car seats reduce the risk of fatal injury by 71 percent for children younger than 1 and by 54 percent for children 1 to 4 in passenger cars, according to NHTSA. In 2009 alone, 754 children age 12 or younger were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes while riding in passenger cars or light trucks. And among those who were fatally injured where restraint use was known, 42 percent were unrestrained.

Many of these tragedies could have been prevented if the children had been in the right restraint for their age and size.

KDOT reminds parents and caregivers to:

- To find a location to have

your seat checked go to www.kansascarseatcheck.org

- Select a car seat based on your child's age and size, choose a seat that fits in your vehicle, and use it every time.

- Always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer's instructions; read and follow the vehicle owner's manual on how to install the car seat using the seat belt or LATCH system; and check height and weight limits.

- To maximize safety, keep your child in the car seat for as long as possible, as long as the child fits within the manufacturer's height and weight requirements.

- Keep your children in the back seat until they are at least 13.

- Always set the example by buckling yourself.

ATTENTION:

Carriers Needed

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY

Come and see Marcia at 215 S. Kansas

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

Email - nortontelegram@nwkansas.com
PHONE 785-877-3361





TAILGATE FOR ALL TROJAN & HUSKY FANS!

Stop by the tennis courts in Almena prior to the Husky and Trojan football game Friday, September 16, for a Fan Tailgate. Get geared up for the big game by celebrating with other Husky and Trojan Fans!

Date: Friday, September 16
Where: Tennis Courts in Almena
Time: 5:30 to 6:30 pm

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