

DAVIS COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 94
BLOOMFIELD, IOWA 52537

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Davis County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 94, Bloomfield, IA 52537
REGULAR MEETINGS: Third Thursday of each month, 7:30 pm, Library basement

1992	President: Sue Spilman	Treasurer: Verle Arnold
Officers	Vice-President: Pat Howk	Corresponding
	Secretary: Alice Huffman	Secretary: Darrell Kerby

Dear Members,

The trees are beginning to turn colors and the chill is in the air. Fall is here! Hope you all are ready for this change of season, because I'm not

This newsletter is the last one you will receive this year. I know, you only will receive three for 1992, but we're changing the printing dates. Next year we will be back to four. They should come out in Jan, April, July, and October. We hope this arrangement will fit better into our schedules and years.

The Society has been turned down on our grant application to purchase a micro-film reader-printer and microfilming probate records. The budget was not prepared correctly. We can and plan to apply again the Spring of 1993. We still need to do some fund-raising to help with the expenses. Anyone wishing to donate may do so by sending it to the society. Please make a note to us that is for the reader-printer fund.

Our society projects are moving along towards completion. We hope to finish some of them up this fall and winter. Watch future newsletters for information on publication dates.

The genealogy library has been well used this summer. The people who have signed in have come from all over the United States. Hope their search was rewarding. If you have suggestions or comments, please let us know.

As we wind this year up and look ahead, remember our future comes from our past. Membership dues for 1993 can now be paid. Pay early and miss the rush.

D. Sue Spilman
President

The following article was submitted by Robert Merritt of Los Angeles. Jane Patterson is his Great-great grandmother.

August 10, 1942
Duncan's Mills, California

Grandma Janey's (Patterson) account of her early life and trip across the plains in a wagon train. Told to her Granddaughter Maxine Clark Hiller.

"I remember I was told I was born in 1858 at Bloomfield, Davis County, Iowa. We lived with Grandmother Grider until I was a year old when we moved to ourselves.

Grandma had a big house and it had a fireplace that was at least ten feet across. The logs had to be rolled in and piled high onto the andirons. Of course, they'd burn all day and all night; the fire never went out.

Reached by a back stairway was a big attic where I remember seeing strings of dried pumpkin hanging from the rafters and containers of popcorn and of cotton stored there.

In the evening after supper, as we called it in those days, all of us would gather around the fireplace and pick the seeds from cotton while we popped corn, ate apples and talked. When the cotton was cleaned Grandmother would dye it black, yellow, blue, brown, or red with dyes made from bark or roots which she gathered herself. Black walnuts provided the browns and the blacks; the yellow came from saffron but I can't recall how she got the other colors.

After the cotton was dyed, Grandmother would card it, then spin it into thread, weave it into cloth from which she cut out the garments - pants, coats, vests, dresses, etc. - and sew them for her family entirely by hand. There was only one girl in the family and she died at about sixteen or eighteen. She'd had the measles. While Grandma was away one day the daughter got the nose bleed and her brothers - there were four boys - put cold water on her to stop it. This well meant treatment drove the measles in, later causing her death. Her name was Jane Eliza and I was named after her. My father said he was too poor to give me a middle name, so I was just plain 'Jane'. These home-made cotton materials were pretty coarse and rough. The women's materials were called 'linsey' and 'woolsey'. I'm not sure if that's the way to spell it. I don't recall that they had any name for the men's cloth though I do remember hearing some cloth called 'jeans'. Nowadays they call men's overalls 'jeans', but in those days it was this cloth they were made of.

The women also made all our wool socks and stockings. Grandmother would take a hank of white wool, tie strings around it's length at one, two, or three inch intervals, then dye the hank. When the strings were removed the yarn underneath remained white and when the stockings were knitted they were striped, the stripes running around the leg like a barber's pole. Some times the colors were just variegated.

The dye-pot was always the stinkin'est thing in the world because they put chamber-lye in it to set the color, I reckon. Ma never told just why they did it.

You've seen a spinning wheel, of course? Well Louie's sister - Louie was later my husband - was once forbidden to attend a dance because her required amount of spinning wasn't done. Not to be outdone, she danced while she worked and by the time her spinning was finished here shoes were worn clear through!

When the old clothes were too worn for use they were cut up into strips, sewed together, would into balls and woven into carpets. Nothing was ever wasted.

All the beds in the house were very high four-posters, some with wooden canopies, some with hand-made flounces around the bottoms. They didn't have springs; ropes were laced both ways across the steads. On the ropes were place home-made straw mattresses. On top of these forty pound feather mattresses were laid, the feathers picked from selected geese by Grandmother herself.

The geese were picked twice a year. The picker would put the live goose's head under her arm (no man ever did this chore) and hold it tight while the heavier feathers on the breast were plucked. Once when I was about nine or ten, after we came to California, I remember a great big fat woman with a goose's head tucked under her arm that way and I sneaked up behind her and teased the goose. Instead of its biting me it bit her and even though I go slapped each time I teased it, it was too much fun to resist. The woman's name was Jane Gard and she lived in Kelseyville in Lake County.

Over the feather mattresses we used home-made quilts filled with home-carded wool and old blankets. Every stitch was made by hand, Grandmother's hand. The spreads were also wool colored blue, white, and red, woven in check and squares. I expect they are pretty valuable now if any can be found.

One of these big beds was in the room with the big fireplace. Stuffed under it was any and everything Granma wanted to get out of sight, not because she wasn't a good housekeeper, but because there were no clothes closets in those days. You see, the flounce hid all.

Out in the lot toward the barn was a big sugarpress where the sugar cane was made into juice which was later boiled down into sugar and syrup. The press was turned by an old gray horse hitched to a shaft and it spent the whole day going 'round and 'round in a circle. Many's the long ride I've had on that old horse's back! I've seen threshing machines operated the same way but using more horses, sometimes as many as twelve. That was in later years, of course.

While I'm on this subject let tell you a little incident. The path the old press horse traveled gradually wore into a circular trough or trench and one day my borthers, O.C. and Harry were playing in it with me. O.C. was the driver and Harry and I were the horses. O.C. stood in the middle of the

circle with a whip in his hand and, as he popped the whip to make us go faster - of course he never really hit us, he cussed a blue streak, and eh really knew how from listening to the real drivers! My Pa came along and heard him but he didn't say anything - then. But after supper that night he called O.C. over to the stove and showed him the teakettle. He pointed out a leak in it and said, "Now you stand there and cuss at that kettle like you did out in the lot today!" O.C. did it but this time there was no heart in his cussin'. I never did hear him swear after that.

I can't remember much more about Grandma's after we moved to town, but I do recall riding out on Saturday nights in a wagon over very rough road. We children would sit in the wagon bed and sign at the tops of our voices. We only sang 'Ah, ah, ah' to our tunes so the jolting of the wagon would make us sound funny. That was lots of fun.

I also remember O.C. falling from a cherry tree once when a bee stung him. the breath was knocked out of him I thought he was dead.

Oh, yes, we rode in sleighs too - with us all tucked under a Buffalo robe- and bells on the horses.

I was about five when I started to school and I had to walk a good mile to get there. It was an old log cabin with a big fireplace. The benches were made of logs sawed in two, flat side up and fitted with sturdy peg-legs. We stayed in school each day from eight to four with a short time out for lunch. The teacher, a man, wouldn't let me go out one day when I really had the need and I had an "accident". So he told one of the bigger girls to take me to her house near by and dry me out. If she hadn't, my clothes would have dried stiff on me and I'd never have reached my own home. Why, it was so cold the milk would freeze on its way from the cow to the bucket, and my mother's washing would be frozen before she could get it on the line.

We always had to shave the breakfast ham with a draw-knife. the fire was kept going all night, but the wooden bucket of water beside it would freeze and the ice'd pop in the middle. We had ice-cream all the time and the milk was all ice. We would wake up in the mornings with the bed clothes iced where our breaths had touched 'em, and we walked to school in lanes between banks of shoveled snow higher than our heads. The snow would cover the fences and pack so hard we could ride right over them.

The Civil War began about that time and I remember we drew up sides in school and had fights over the issues, no even knowing what it was all about. One side would sing, 'We'll hang Jeff Davis to a Sour Apple Tree' and the other side would sing, 'John Brown's Body likes a Moldering in the Grave'.

My folks were Northerners. Louie's, who lived in the same community and whom we knew well, were Southern sympathizers. My father enlisted and had served for nine months when he was disabled. It seems his company was moving by train when it was attacked by the 'rebels', and, in order to escape the wreckage, he jumped and ruptured himself badly.

About this time friends and neighbors were being organized to make up a train

to travel to California.

Uncle Henry Grider, Pa's brother, whose eye-sight had kept him from serving during the war, had reached California by vessel around Cape Horn and had written, telling of the wonderful country and opportunities, asking his family to come as soon as possible.

Uncle Henry's father-in-law, Dr. Fulkerson, had money enough to buy and outfit a train of about thirty wagons with four mules to each as well as a carriage for his own family use. Other families, with their equipment, signed up to go along, some to drive Uncle Henry's stock and others to make their home in the new country.

Louie's father, Joshua Patterson, furnished another big outfit consisting of his family and friends and the groups joined for the journey, leaving in April 1864 taking the Old Emigrant Trail.

Most of the members of the train had been vaccinated for small-pox. About ten days out their arms became so sore there was danger of losing them and some turned back to their homes. All we could figure was there must have been something wrong with the vaccine.

Aunt Sarah, Uncle Henry's wife, and her family traveled with us. Our wagons kept together and we agreed to go fifty-fifty on work, food, etc. Well, my mother found herself doing all the cooking before long, and we discovered that Aunt Sarah was gathering her family into their wagon and feeding luxuries she'd stored away, with no thought of sharing a thing even when Pa and Ma were sick.

I remember s big black dog Aunt Sarah had. He had a white ring around his neck so we called him "Ring". It's hard to believe that Ring walked every step across those plains except when we ferried the rivers and his feet got so sore they had to make moccasins for him.

We crossed the Missouri River on ferry boats, a few wagons at a time, which, of course, took some time. I noticed as I went across how very muddy the water was. Some days later we reached the plains and since there was danger from Indians, each night we'd drive our wagons into a big circular formation for protection.

Often the Indians would come dashing up on their pominies and ask for food-'bissy cut' they'd say, meaning bread. Some of them had learned a little English. At first we didn't know any better than to feed them, but later it got to be too good a thing so we stopped it. They never did molest us until we were in Colorado someplace, but they did massacre trains before and after us several times. Our train was so large I suspect they were afraid of us.

Once Pa whipped an old squaw. Several of them came and squatted around the campfire with almost no clothes on, just a thin slip-like garment. The men seldom had much on either except a breech-clout. When Pa told them to go away the old one just squatted until he took his big whip and lashed her legs. We expected trouble over that but there wasn't any.

Pa took a spell of pneumonia and the whole train was held up for a while. My mother wasn't very well either part of the time.

Because of the scarcity of green feed for the stock our train separated into two groups, one going two or three days ahead. After that the Indians tried several times to stampede the stock, but never succeeded in getting any. An old white mare was belled and the mules always followed her. So; when Indians threatened our men would tear out looking for her and they always brought the whole herd back without having to fight. At a sign of any real danger a rider was sent to bring up the other train.

Shortly after Pa's spell of pneumonia, while the train was still together, we reached the Platte River, probably while we were still in Nebraska. The river was swollen from cloud-burst until it was a mile wide and impossible to ford. On the opposite bank was a train of freight wagons waiting for the water to go down. I guess we lost another ten days there.

One day a freighter, pulled by about twelve oxen, tried to ford the river. The oxen were swept around by the current and became so tangled in each other's gear that the driver had to cut them loose from their yokes to save them from drowning. Then the big wasgon loaded with food-stuffs all tied in under canvas rolled over and started down stream. It lodged on sandbar close to our side and our men were able to salvage some of its freight. Boxes and boxes of soaked crackers were carried to shore and we children didn't wait from them to dry but dived in and devoured all in sight. Barrels of flour and sugar were in some better condition; they got wet on the outside, forming a crust which left most of the inside still usable. Bacon, potatoes and the like weren't damaged but much of the coffee and tea was lost.

After that, Pa decided to buy lumber from a mill near by and make a barge large enough to ferry one wagon at a time if the lumber man would agree to buy back the barges. He did and established his own ferry system for future wagons. This way our wagons and the families in them reached the other bank of the river in safety, but mules had to swim.

The mules had to be led across and not a man volunteered for them hazardous job. Pa was still weak from pneumonia and still suffered from his war injuries, but he said he'd take them across. Ma felt he'd never live if he got wet in that icy water and Pa, himself, didn't expect to come out of it alive and didn't much care, but he mounted the old white mare with the bell and rode into the river. All the way across he fought mules as the current swept them around; sometimes they were under him, sometimes stranded on a sand bar, and other times sinking into quicksand, but he made it across without the loss of a single mule.

The men on the freighter's side undressed Pa, wrapped him in blankets, filled him with whiskey and Jamaica ginger, and put him to bed. Until many years later, at his last sickness, I never knew him to have a sick day.

We rode on from here for several days. One night while the wagons were being unhitched, several Indian braves approached the one owned by James Patterson,

Louie's brother, a young man with a young family. The braves asked for 'bissy cuts' but Lizzie, James' wife, had no biscuits or bread and offered them crackers. They were insulted, crumbled the crackers and threw them back into the wagon. James picked up a neck-yoke and hit one, knocking him out. The braves picked up the fellow and carried him away but returned in a little while and demanded the man who hit the chief's son! James had been hidden in one of the wagons by that time and men refused to give him up. The Indians threatened to burn the whole train, but little spit-fire Abe Ramage gave them such a dressing down they got good and scared and went away.

That night the Indians had a big war dance and we all got so tired of the noise that Pa and about a half dozen other dare-devils went over and actually made them calm down.

For several days after that the savages marched on each side of the train threatening all kinds of destruction if James wasn't turned over to them. They finally left us from fear of our guns, I suppose.

Once we traveled a mountain pass where the Indians really could have done us a lot of damage and Grandpa Patterson and Dr. Fulkerson, being old men and cautious, warned all to be quiet, not speak above a whisper during the night we had to camp there. But the young folks weren't afraid of anything and cut up and sang all night long. There were some mighty fine singers in that crowd. We never saw those Indians again.

After we came out of the pass there was less danger because of the forts and soldiers along the route.

At Fort Bridger there were many soldiers and we were invited to fort to dance. Pa said we'd go if the soldiers would promise to treat the women with due respect, which they promised of course. Most of the older women stayed in camp to take care of us, but Pa and Ma went and all the other young people too. The soldiers sent out the ambulance to bring in their guests - an ambulance drawn by army mules. Ma said that when they drove up to gate a soldier looked out with surprise all over his face and said, "My Gawd! Look at the women!" As punishment for his profanity before the ladies, he had to carry a sack of sand around all evening on his back. Ma said she never felt so sorry for anyone. After dancing they were served a dinner. Such a dinner they hadn't seen the likes of in many a day. Food had been kind of skimpy for us for some time.

Going through Utah the Mormons gave us more trouble than the Indians; they disguised themselves as Indians and tried to run the stock away. Once two men in their own clothes, spies, came to the camp late at night and Pa made them get off their horses, lay their guns down, and sit by the campfire as his 'guests' 'till daylight when the rest of the camp woke up. Then he let them go.

Guess I didn't tell you Pa was Captain of the train.

We had trouble among our men too - political, religious and family. Even the children got into fights that drew the older ones in. Just the same we all

had fun and good times. We had church and singing - lots of it.

We saw many buffalo and antelope but the men never killed buffalo. I don't know why not - they did kill many an antelope. Maybe it was because we needed the buffalo chips for our fires! We didn't have any wood.

One night all who had legs and could use 'em walked the desert to give the mules a rest from our weight.

We didn't always have decent drinking water either, and nothing by this time to put in it make it taste better.

Whenever we'd stop we children would fan out and explore the big ant hills that were thrown up all over that Utah country. Years before, the traders had brought beads to trade to the Indians for hides, food, etc. The Indians decorated their clothes with them. Beads, evidently lost, were gathered by the ants and we'd find as many as a cupful at a time in these hills. Of course we had fight the ants - they weren't the biting kind - big ones though and we scared them off. I collected two or three pints of beads.

Near Salt Lake we laid over so the men could work to buy food, ours being too low for comfort by that time. In fact, were about to starve. I remember Ma taking two necklaces I had, a blue one and an amber one, along with all those Indian beans and trading them to a Mormon for buttermilk. The woman we traded with asked me not to tell or the other wives would kill her.

We hadn't had any green vegetables but wild onions and some kind of wild lettuce for over two months. Our original food supply was meant to cover a three month trip but, owing to having to forage for mule feed along the way, we were five months reaching California. Why, people traveling with oxen and traveling every day arrived before we did!

Our food, by the time we reached Salt Lake, was down to crackers and dried apples and many were sick. Only one died, however, on the whole trip - a baby.

When we got to Carson City, Nevada, Uncle Henry met us with three or four wagon loads of melons, fruit and vegetables, and there was such a celebration that many of the train never even went to bed that night. Not only had we had no food but Uncle Henry hadn't seen his family for over a year. There was cause to celebrate!

When we reached Susanville, the train dividied, the Patterson train going north and the Fulkerson train, including the Griders, (remember, I was a Grider then) going south to Santa Rosa.

The Patterson settled in Tehama County near Red Bluff.

The other branch of the family went to Uncle Dick and Aunt Sally Fulkerson's place in Rincon Valley, east of Santa Rosa. They had a big two-story house, a big vineyard, a wine cellar full of wine, (and maybe you think they didn't drink it!) and a room full of watermelons so large I couldn't lift one. I was six years old. They had all kinds of fruit and vegetables and it looked

like Paradise to us. From the stories I'd heard of California I expected to find gold in the streets and all the tress and thea countyr red because of the 'redwoods' I'd heard them taling about.

I went to school there and I remember our teachers name was Fontz. He was studying to be a doctor and during recess he'd sleep and all of us go clear off from school and keep quiet and he'd often sleep over time.

We lived in a place called "The Hawkins Place' and my brother Harry was born there.

Some of the name of people in that neighborhood were: Mary and Vade Lambert, twins; Wilkins; Old Man Docker and Lou Birch.

Some of the families in the combined trains were: Greeves; McNutt; Uncle Sam Grider, Pa's younger brother; Joe Luster; Geroge Morris (he was teacher and taught me to read on the plains); the Pattersons- Josuan and Grizzly-Ann whose children were James, Louie, Tommy, Billy, and Nacy. Billy died of tuberculosis and six weeks later Nancy died. There were George Merrittt and wife Sally, and their Children: Frank, John, Joe, George, May, Tom and Ann. Stufflebean (can't recall his first namd) and his wife Rachel with their children: Johnny, Annie, and Jimmie. Annie stood up with me when I was marride. There wer Turner Wallace; Henry Grider and wife Sarah with their sons Dode, Elmer, and Newt.

James Patterson, son of Joshua, married Mary (White she is now) [ed. note- this has been crossed out, with "Lizzie" written in]. Mary and I are the only two, as far as we know, who are still living of all those who crossed the plaines when we did. (Mary died in 1954)

We spent about three years in Tincon Valley on Santa rosa Creek, then moved to Kelseyville. Two or three years later when I was sixteen we went to Red Bluff. There I renewed my acquaintance with Louis Patterson and we were married and started raising Californians.

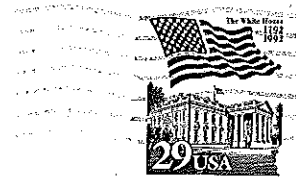
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In order to better coordinate work among researchers, we are asking you to detach (or photocopy) this section and return it to the Society. These will be kept on file in the library and published once a year in the Newsletter. If you need more room, please feel free the use an addtional sheet of paper.

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