

Notes made by Sarah Neff from her father's diary, March 5, 1964

Clay Township derives its name from Henry Clay, an eminent Statesman. Clay Township is located in the S.E. part of Grundy Co. Bounded on the North by Palermo Twp, W. by Felix, S. by Marshall & E. by Tama Co. In year 1863 the first election was held at Wolf Grove School house. The first 3 school houses were built in 1860 by Solomon Wilhelm & Jonas Wiley at Wolf Grove, Conrad Grove & W. part of Felix. The oldest living settler was WW Brooks in Autumn of 1854. J.W. Conrad made 2nd entry of land in Grundy Co. on Dec. 6, 1853. He began breaking sod in Spring of 1854 & planted corn that yielded 20 bu. Per acre. A yr. later his son HH Brooks came and located here. Elmore farm. Later parts of 50s brought a large immigration. Among them was Solon Beaman who bought land in 56 and located on farm where town of Beaman now stands in 1860. Duncan McMartin & Henry van Ness locating on McMartin farm N of Beaman. Duncan McMartin came from NY & bought 2000 acres in what is now Clay Twp. & made the trip back home every summer until his death.

First 4th-July celebration held at Conrad Grove in 1857 and all settlers for 15-20 miles around were there. Dr. Elis Fisher delivered the oration & dinners spread on long tables. After dinner they visited & then shook hands & goodbyes & farewells were said all thinking the day was well spent. At this time Ia. City was the nearest market. IN latter part of 50s Ill. Central R.R> was built as far West as Waterloo. It was only 45 mile drive across prairie to Waterloo. When hauling grain several neighbors went together each man had his grain in sacks so if they got stuck it could be carried out. In winter they often upset & in summer they'd get stuck. Few bridges those days. 3 day trip there & back. All men wore in cold winter weather was cow hide boots and many did not even have overcoats.

Latter part of 60s Joseph Arnold came & farmed farm now owned by Billy and Helen Alexander. Samuel Arnold his father had bought it in early 50s & was first to pay taxes at Grundy Center after Grundy Co. was organized as a separate commonwealth. At the close of 60s Ia. Central R.R. was built & that gave birth to towns of Liscomb & Union. That gave a market & trading place a few miles nearer than M'town.

In winter of 68 a CO. organized as Wolf Creek Valley Prospecting Coal Co. "organized to prospect along Wolf Creek for coal. It was a stock Co. 10.00 q share -some taking several shares. Committee appointed to investigate & get prices on machinery, but it never materialized

Rev Chase Jones Jr. had a store about 1865 on old Brown place & was post master. It was located where Bill Ruos (?) lives now S. of Beaman. Henry Stahl had a blacksmith shop across street from the store & the town was called Jerusalem. Mr. Snow had a flour mill on the bank of Wolf Creek ½ mile E. of town of Jerusalem. This place was called Jerico. Wadeloup (Post Office) was a mail & stage route from M'town to Grundy Center at close of 60s. Grundy prairies were well dotted with houses & wheat & corn fields. They had begun to work roads & build bridges across the sloughs & creeks. Mr. Stahl (Marvel Oglesby's grandfather came from Ohio. He was also a minister & married people.

In 1872 a great grange movement -Real name was Patrons of Husbandry. Origin was secret society for farmers, mechanics & laborers & their wives merchants were not eligible. Purpose was for consumer to trade direct with manufacturer - cut out middleman & merchants. Clay Grange 301 met at school house. Regalia was a sash with No. & name on, emblems were a plow, spade & hoe, about everyone joined & thought it was a way to prosperity.

In 1872 J.K. Smith & Co. built a store across creek from where town of Beaman now stands on WW Brooks farm (where Elmores live). He was postmaster of Waderloup P.O. Mrs. Smith engaged in business there till 1875 when railroad was built. He kept a good stock of goods in country store & had a good trade. Talk of a R. Road from Liscomb to Wadeloup to Grundy Center & a John Tripp came from Liscomb & told us there would be a R.R. along W Creek.

In 1874 Railroad line was established from Des Moines to Ames & out by Ill. Grove. Representatives from all along the line met at Liscomb winter of 1875. New Co. called Farmers Union R.R. Co. a stock co. 100.00 per share, Directors S. Beeman, J.W. Arnold, & John Tripp & others started with several thousands of dollars of stock subscribed. A man from Chicago, Edwards, contracted several miles of grading. Order was placed for 1 engine & 6 or 8 cars. Track was laid W. & E. of Liscomb Round House at Liscomb. Company located a station on S.S. & H.H. Beeman's farm & they laid out the town & gave it the name of Beeman. J.K. Smith moved his store across creek to town of Beeman. 4 or 5 other store buildings built. Blacksmith shop, Hotel warehouse to handle grain, lumber yards all ready for business when train got to Beaman first in year 76. Beaman was a busy place. Kept one train busy to carry grain from Beeman. Several thousands bu. corn cribbed there. Could make 3 to 4 trips to town in one day. IN 1880 June town of Conrad was laid out.

From Dorothy McMartin's records –

Memorial Day at Beaman started after GAR post was organized Mar. 30 -1883.

May 30 was much like today decorating graves firing squad picnic & program.

1881 houses in Beaman & who occupied them – Grand father Evans came to town. Old hotel stands on what we today think of Sandlin or was it was moved to present site later replaced by present brick building built by Henry Eberhardt.

Mrs. Stull (Dorothy's mother) said it was a grand affair – out of season foods, etc.

Nearly all houses here at that time have undergone remodeling. Dingman house was there. Evert Parkins house being built. MVB Evans built in 1881. House S. of Imp. Bldg Hutchinson home was depot agent. Elmer Anderson home opera house was S of it – medicine shows, commencement held there. Cow pasture up to W. Stephenson's little house. Church was being built. School house where parsonage is church & S. school in school. Parsonage was Kale (?) house now torn down.