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The "History of the Valley" is written by Watson Knight, a resident of Spring Valley Manor, Perry, Iowa. His history dates from 1860 to 1964 and describes the families and times of the area west of the Des Moines River at the Dallas and Boone County dividing line across from the old Elk Rapids Post Office and south two miles to the Chestnut Ford Bridge.

The writer was born at the Mill sight in Des Moines Township, Dallas County on October 2nd, 1866. He grew up in the Valley and later married Carrie B. Pierce who was also a Woodward area Pioneer.

Mr. Knight brings his history to a close at the age of 101 years by reporting the building of the Saylorville Dam which will flood his beloved valley and force the residents to vacate.

We start at the old Elk Rapids, one of the first post offices. It was on the east side of the Des Moines River along with a store and later a school. There was a dam across the river and a grist mill for grain grinding on the west side in Dallas County. A ferry boat put in on the Boone County side. An old plow share hung on a tree limb with a hammer to beat it when you wanted to cross the river. The boat was wide enough and long enough to drive onto with a team of oxen or horses hitched to the wagon. There was a hinged approach at either end of the boat that was let down to drive on and pull straight when crossing the river. Fastened to the approach, or apron, was a "snub rope." At either side of the river were stakes firmly placed so you could quickly let down the apron, jump to shore and fasten the upper stream corner of the boat, else the water's current would swing the boat around sidewise. It was quite a profession those days to be able to handle a ferry boat. They were obliged to charge twenty-five cents for the round trip and did not leave much to get your sugar, coffee and tobacco. In those cases you would have to take a chicken or two along with you. This was the north end of the valley.

The south end of the valley was a fording place in the Des Moines River known as the Chestnut Ford. Later there was a bridge built across and to this day it is known as the Chestnut Ford Bridge. It was named after a pioneer settler, Wm. Chestnut, in after years known as Old Uncle Bill Chestnut. His family consisted of two boys and I would say some eight girls. He built a log house with a large fireplace in it, had good barns, raised wheat, oats and corn, and always had good milk cows and horses for those days. He was a good cradler of grain. Few now would know what is meant by cradling small grain. It was a scythe in reality with long finger-like curved holders behind the scythe blade, forming a cradle for the grain to fall in until there was enough to tie up in a bundle. Then you slide the cradle fingers from in under the grain and left it lying on the ground ready to be tied in bundles, ready to be flailed out, ready to be taken to mill and ground into flour. This had to be done in those days if you had wheat bread to eat which many people did not have. And I think Uncle Bill Chestnut was the first person in the valley that ever had a horse drawn machine that mowed off the small grain. The grain fell back on a platform where a boy, mostly on account of the weight, sat on a stool with a rake in hand and when the proper amount for a bundle had fallen, he would deftly rake it to the ground.

The top end of the valley is a mile north of the east and west line dividing Boone and Dallas Counties. Elk Rapids was east of the river in Boone County and our "Valley" territory started on the west side of the Des Moines River

river bottom lands widen as you travel south down river toward the Chestnut Ford Bridge.

At the north end of the Valley, there are graves up the hill a ways. There was a house built at the foot of the hill on a creek bottom land near where these people, the Coles, were buried. From reading, I believe that these were two graves, a father and a son.

My records of Father's and Mother's ages are pretty much as daughter Grace White's in Cleveland, Ohio. Father Sylvanus Knight put a steam powered saw mill at a point east of the now Don Wright home, down the hill and on the west river bank. When you are traveling eastward passing Wright's, and at the top of the hill where you turn right or left, you will see a large pile of clay from the old Phildia coal mine and that covers the place where the mill once sat. The date of its placing is somewhat estimated, but it would be near enough. Father Knight was a widower from Indiana and had a family of two boys and one, if not two, girls. Mother was a widow with four boys. Her name was Weinhart. Her husband was a full blood German and I think was located where Adel is now. Their son, the oldest, was killed by Indians somewhere in Arizona during an Indian war. Lorenzo, the next son, died in Los Angeles, California in about 1958, and was buried in Ankeny, Iowa at the age of one hundred and four years. George was a school teacher and taught, perhaps one or two terms, where pioneer children attended. It was located at the top of the hill just east of the Don Wright home and was on what is now his farm land. Theodore Weinhart was noted for his height, six feet seven inches tall; died, I would say, around 1930. Father Knight and Mother Weinhart would have been married by this time. We will say, on estimating, they had a first child, a daughter Ella, who died when she was about five years old and I was a baby. I was born in 1866, so I would say the mill was located some time in the 1850's. I got off the track here as far as our history of the valley is concerned.

Stopping around the old mill sight, we were some three miles east of what we now speak of as old Xenia. I do not have the date it was established, but some time before the mill was put in there. I shall go up the hollow from where Dow Davis owned a farm, and I come out at old Xenia, which a long time ago was on a stage route from Des Moines and north. It crossed the Des Moines river somewhere north and west of which later became Boones Burrow and nows Boones fifth ward.

The stage route out of Des Moines came to Lincoln, or better known as dog town, and there they had to relay with a new team to Xenia, which was of course, another stage stop. I recall the old stage was sitting around Xenia and recall it being set on a hayrack and hauled among

the rag muffins parade to a Fourth of July celebration at a grove a mile east of Xenia. The mail came in to the Xenia post office on Tuesdays and Saturdays; a great deal of the time on horseback in wet weather. The route kept as near the river as they could, as it drained from these points to the Des Moines River or to Beaver Creek lower lands. About the last carrier I recall now was John Perry. He had a son, Ell Perry, who did a great deal of the route and went north to a post office called Prairie Hill, (or Center), and returned.

Now I will start from Xenia going east toward the Valley. The first home is less than a mile and at the Xenia cemetery was a Wm. Doke. Then on east a mile, there is a right hand turn, southward, one eighth of a mile long. Just after the turn, was the home of an old lady called by all who knew her, Aunt Jayne Newland, mother of the late Joe Newland of Woodward. Her daughter, Lib Spencer, a widow, lived near by at the left turn on east again. She had two sons and three daughters. I think her son Dave Spencer built the home where a Frantum lives on Highway 141 south of Woodward just after you turn westward toward Perry.

Going back toward the valley eastward from Lib Spencers, and where Charley Hutt built, was a man named John Hunt. Near there and across to the north side of the road, was a log house built by Louis Rhoads, the father of the late Dan Rhoads of Woodward. That house has within the last few years, been moved to Woodward by Dean Hitsman.

Now I will go on east passing Don Wright's home and over the hill into the Valley where the mill was. So, from the Cole graves south, Louis Rhoads bought up some old timber acreages of two, four, or five acres from prairie residents who had cut the timber off for fuel. He cut down thorn trees, other small stuff and brush, using it for fencing in the forty acres between the foot of the west hill to the Des Moines River. Now in those days, the saw mill had become quite a business and Mrs. Knight's sister's husband, Wm. Ruth, bought a half interest. He was an old Pennsylvania Dutchman, who had some knowledge of timber business and became the head sawyer. Later on Father Knight sold out to Uncle Billy Ruth, as he was called. Later on he took a notion to build a grist mill for corn meal and flour. As Father Knight was a millright among other professions, he took over the construction of the mechanical parts, while others erected the main building at the side of the steam engine where it was arranged to take the power from. When completed, the mill was operated each Saturday and grew in business until the ear corn that had to be shelled was a problem. Some customers had learned to turn a scoop shovel upside down over a half bushel measure, sit straddle of it, and rake the ear of corn up or down cross wise with the front of the scoop. Then they put in a hand

shovel that you turned over a power sheller that farmers could drive beside of and shovel the ear corn into.

There were two stories to the mill's building as the corn or wheat had to be elevated to the second floor in order to be fed downward to the grinding burs. The wheat had to be again elevated to the bolting chest on the second floor. This consisted of a hexagonal shaped cylinder about five feet in diameter and some ten or more feet long. It was covered a yard wide at the end where the ground wheat first entered with fine enough silk that nothing but flour would go through. The next yard in length was some coarser silk and a second grade of flour called "Shorts" went through leaving the bran to pass out the end of the bolting chest and each product was sent down a square spout made of six inch wide boards with the outlet above the floor, so as to fasten a grain sack on catching the different products. However, those days the bran was really a waste product, and you did not dare allow the cattle to eat their fill of it or it would bloat and kill them. What was not utilized in making swill, a drink for the hogs, they had to haul where they could dump it into the river. Now we pay a big price for it to eat as a delicious breakfast food. Most folks at that time could not afford flour for bread stuff, only on Sunday dinners and especially if the preacher was there. It was mostly corn bread in those days with good "grease" gravy and sorghum. On especially good days we had biscuits made from shorts.

The mill operations turned into quite a business, and there were a good many wanted as workers. At that time there were no other improvements between the mill and a farm with a brush fence around it to keep the cattle out. A steady hand was required as a fireman at the mill. There was a Dave Lease who built a one room house with a lean-to kitchen on seven acres, mostly on a side hill and joining the mill land ownings. Just who Dave Lease was, I do not know, but when I knew of him, he was a widower and had two daughters that I knew of. One, Milly Jane, was married and widowed. Her name was Secord and, like enough, her husband was killed in the Civil War. The younger daughter was keeping house for her father. Her name was Phoebe Lease and she married one Tom Davis and they raised a son, Fred Davis and a daughter, Alta Davis. I can remember her as a cute little girl. Dave Lease, I remember after Phoebe left home, mated again and that is the end of any history I knew about him.

Across the little hollow, with a nice spring in it, south from Leases, was some-what of a level between the foot of the hill and the Des Moines River. I rather think that Uncle Billy Ruth, who was Mrs. Knight's sister's husband, built a house for Grand Pap Fish who had as daughters, three, and sons, five. His wife died and he married again. As long as

I remembered him, he was crippled up terribly with rheumatism, was very ambitious, and a great advisor in a financial way. I do not think he was ever worth a dollar but lived to be 99 and was laid to rest by the side of his first wife in the old Xenia cemetery.

Between his house and the mill, Uncle Billy Ruth built a house that they lived in most of the rest of their days. They built a house south of the mill for hired help. There was also a house built on the side hill which was almost west of the mill. My folks lived there when sister Grace Luther was born and that would have been in April, 1875 or '76. My half brothers, the Weinharts, had grown so that Lorenzo and Theodore did work in the saw mill and in the woods. There was an early day pioneer, Washa Watson, who had come in the Valley. He owned a farm which would be from just south of the mill farm, on south to the east and west line up past the Ting and Billy Wilson places and the Dow Davis' land, and by the old pioneer Asbury Houchins place where Larry Sayles lives. By the way, while we are there, that is a section line that comes out to meet the east turn at the Carl Staker farm. That Washa Watson farm was finally the Jack Davis farm and as I have in mind, was another brother of Dow and Tom.

There is a little story you may be familiar with. Jack Davis had a son Will. Jack was sinking a coal shaft and son Will and a Will Chestnut were working in the shaft when it caved in. Young Davis was sitting on a stool holding a drill in position for Chestnut to strike with a sledge. They were making a hole to put a shot or blast into to break up the hard material they were going through. Chestnut was standing and started in a climbing motion as dirt piled around him and kept his head above the dirt while the dirt caught Davis in a sitting posture and smothered him to death.

Tom Davis seemed to own land next to the east and west road as of today, but the house was about half way between the now Ting and Billy Wilson places that was earlier the Dug Breakfield place. Where Ting Wilson now lives and south, was known as the Wallace farm. The old lady known as Granny Wallace lived on the north side of a creek that divided her from the Tabor farm on her south, and is owned by Wm. Newland. His son Dave lived there the last I knew. That farm connected with the Uncle Bill Chestnut place on its north.

Now let me go back to 1875 and say that Grace was born in the house where the Knight family then lived, close to the old saw mill. A half-brother, George Weingart, who was attending Normal at Adel, had met a young lady there who lived in DeSoto with her parents. Through this medium he found there was a wonderful opportunity in a wagon shop in DeSoto for Father Knight and convinced him to the point of moving to DeSoto. This was about thirty miles

distant, and in those days, there were no established roads. It happened in that spring of 1875 to be a very rainy time and the ponds of water and muddy roads across the prairie made it impossible to cross with team and wagon. Father Knight sawed out at the old saw mill, proper material for a boat large enough to have up and down sides about 18 inches high. The ends were tapered up to some extent. A roofed place in the center was large enough to protect the bedding and furniture from rain. This boat was provided with oars, one at either end, hinged at the center, with the paddle end in the water and the operating ends in the boat. You know in those days they rafted both lumber and logs to market in Des Moines. Father handled the rear oar and young Theodore Weinhart the front oar, working under Father's command of "To the right" or "To the left" as the situation called for. Sister Grace was around five or six weeks old at this time.

The first day out, toward evening, there came up a terrible black cloud. We tied up on the east shore where there was a farm house in sight and gotlodging for the night. The storm was not bad, but during the night I got up in my sleep and was wandering about the room. I was around nine years of age then. The next day we landed in the quiet waters of the so called pond, perhaps a mile or so above the dam across the river. We tied up for the night. Mother was afraid we might get loose while sleeping and go over the dam, so Father tied a rope to a large grind stone he had aboard and cast it overboard as an anchor. Next in Mother's mind was that I had walked in my sleep the night before so Father tied a cord about one of my wrists and to, I suppose, a bed leg as I slept on the floor. I do not think Mother slept at all. Morning came and Father, as he would say, "Put off for the city". Next came one or two horse drays and our belongings were taken to the Rock Island freight house and billed to DeSoto which was six miles from Adel, Iowa. We all went to Adel on a passenger train.

Before we left the Valley where Old Washa Watson lived on the since Jack Davis farm, he gave me a gold dollar for being named Watson Knight. By the way, he had never seen a railroad train and promised that he would some day try to go to Dallas Center to see one. That was the line which is now Des Moines north through Perry. I never knew whether he ever saw a train or not, but I have seen his grave in that cemetery southeast of Woodward, toward Granger.

We headed for DeSoto and where Mother's brother, my Uncle George Fish, was running a "Wagon Shop" and was anything but a mechanic. Father built quite a business, which would have been alright, only most of the work and material was booked and still is.

We later moved back to the old mill place in the Val-

ley. I have no dates, but I graduated in the fourth reader class in DeSoto and that was the end of my school days.

Now, back in the south end of the valley, let's take in a border stop where a creek mouth emptying into the Des Moines River, separates the old Frank West coal mine of twenty acres from the Valley. Go westward, where later the Old Uncle Johnny Strange started a coal mine and, I would presume, on the west half of the forty acre tract that the Frank West coal mine owned. There at the northwest corner of that twenty, is the road north out of the Valley to the west. From that same starting point and across the road is the southwest corner of the old Chestnut farm. Travel north there until a creek is reached that separates it from that part of the Valley. At the left, or west, there was later a coal mine that was electrically equipped. It had power mining machines that mined under the vein of coal enough so as to break the coal downward from the roof, or layer above it, usually slate.

I am not too familiar with this story, except that a man from Jamaica formed a stock company and manufactured brick and tile there. At that time the Milwaukee railroad crossed the Des Moines River in the route from Woodward to Madrid (had a gravel pit mostly on the south of the right of way) and ran a side track to the Clay Brick & Tile Co. Zartman was the man's name, and he had two young men, twin brothers, that looked so near alike that if they were dressed alike you would not know them apart. They afterward owned that tract of land and started a business of raising day old chicks to sell. They both worked at the Woodward State Hospital, but I do not recall their names. I went there with a party to look at that acreage and the buildings as it was on sale by the owners that worked for the Rubber Tire Co. in Des Moines. Their price was prohibitive to a buyer.

Now go south from Billy Wilson's and north from the Brick & Tile Works to pioneer days where Wm. Winslow built a log cabin and farmed about seven acres of corn here and there in small patches. He marked it out, as they called it, with one horse and a single shovel plow. His horses weighed around 1000 pounds each. Jinny was a black and Molly was a bay. Jinny had all the work to do in the field. Winslow never used lines. Winslow was a Quaker and when he started to work he would say, "Now Jinny, it's thee and me for it today". It was "Haw" or "Gee, Jinny", to get straight lines and then you dropped the corn at the cross marks and covered it with a hoe. During those periods, Jinny rested in the shade if it was warm. Molly was smarter and did not learn "Gee" and "Haw" very well, so you had to use lines. When it was near quitting time, Molly would try to go to dinner, mostly after about eleven o'clock.

It might be well here to mention that Wm. Winslow lived the rest of his life raising a large family. The oldest, Isaac Newton, married and raised two children; a boy, Elie was

drowned at swimming near Maxwell, Iowa where he was doing work with a team of horses on some Milwaukee Railroad work. That must have been about 1879 or '80. His daughter, Ella, who was younger and married, was burned to death where she lived on a farm about six miles south of Madrid on the old Polk City road. I think next came Chusa Winslow, who married a neighbor's daughter named Kate Houchin. The only memory I have of that family is that a daughter Maude married Walter Kahler whose son is postmaster at Granger and that she was still living in 1965. A third son was Jessie Winslow, who also married a neighbor girl by the name of Mary Wallace. Jessie later retired from farming and resided in Woodward, Iowa, where he at one time ran a harness business. All the family he had that I can recall, was two sons that later married and at one time lived in Woodward. Next in the family was a bunch of girls and I would not recall all of their names. I think the oldest one was Sarah Ann, who married a Civil War soldier named Meek, who lost his life in the army. They had a son Christy whom Wm. Winslow and wife raised to manhood. There was a Thana who grew to womanhood and was married and died. Next was Susan Amanda who married a minister and lived in Winterset a good while. I remember their marriage and helped chiveri them at the Wm. Winslow log cabin home. Now Sereptann married a Henry Hargis of Des Moines territory and I do not have any recollection of their family as they lived in Kansas City, Missouri, and Omaha, Nebraska. Then there was Elizabeth Ann, called Bess, who was married to Theodore Weinhart, who was my half-brother. They raised two boys, George and Joe. Joe was in the First World War and since died and George is living in Des Moines yet at the date of November, 1965. The father and mother of the two boys passed away some years ago, I have not the dates. The youngest girl, Flora Jane, who married a Melvin Pierce of Woodward, seemed to have later lived in Fairmont, Minnesota and I have no record of and do not know about their children. They had a daughter, Elsie that married a man named Hitsman. She later died and I do not have a record of her family. She was living in Woodward as late as November 1965 and would be my cousin via marriage.

Wm. Winslow had, as we called it, a cane mill where he made sorghum molasses on the shares for those who raised sorghum cane. He prepared it by cutting off the seed top and stripping the blades, like on corn, off the stalks, cutting off the stalks at the ground, delivering it at the cane mill where it was run through between two iron rollers, propelled by horse power, catching the juice in a barrel. It was then carried in buckets to a pan where it was boiled down to sorghum molasses. This pan was about six feet long with wooden boards for sides which were rounded up at the ends. Then a sheet metal about three feet wide was used for a bottom. They placed it over a furnace that was enough less in width so

as not to burn the wood sides of the pan. They tried to locate the furnace where the ground took a sudden rise of a foot or so and dug out the shape necessary in the earth with a short chimney at the back. The fires were fed by such wood mostly gathered up in the woods where limbs of trees had fallen. Winslow had to watch over the pan as it heated to a point where a green scum arose. The secret of good sorghum was to remove the scum quickly before it could boil back into the juice. The skimming device was a piece of scrap tin shaped something like the dust pan and fastened on an old broom handle. The skimmings were placed in a barrel where chemical action took place and it turned into a high grade vinegar which was free to those who care to carry it away. Sorghum was valued at 30 cents to 40 cents per gallon and Winslow would have to find a store market some where that would pay for it in calico for the girl's dresses. Of course they had to have a small amount of coffee and a little pepper and salt. Otherwise people had to raise what they had to eat. Mother Winslow was a seamstress and aside from her homework, she did work for those that were able to have it done. The boys, when old enough, got some work at saw mills or farm work. The girls were in demand at times of sickness at neighboring places and earned as much as 75 cents a week so they educated the family well. The old folks were from Indiana, strict Quakers in religion. Card playing, dances and the playing of 'Fiddle' was the works of the devil.

Now I will speak of a lapse of the time while my father and mother were living in DeSoto, which was mentioned earlier in this writing. I returned to the old mill neighborhood in the Valley. I will again mention the Jack Davis farm, where Brig Davis was living, a young man, his wife's name Ida, and they had a little boy, perhaps three years old. I worked for Briggs doing spring plowing with two horses and a walking plow. There were a few tree stumps that had rotted in the roots enough that I was instructed to pull out as many as I could by letting the plow hook on and allowing the team to pull a little. I was proud to report that I had pulled out one or more each day, most of which would be perhaps two feet in diameter and would have to be drug off on the portion of the ground that had not yet been plowed. Now I cannot recall what ever became of the Brigg Davis family. I would suppose he may have been Jack Davis' son.

The next memory of mine was that of Dow Davis. He lived on the "Granny" Wallace grounds. That would be where Ting Wilson lives now in 1965. The home was about the same place as the now Ting Wilson place. I helped Dow gather corn. It was rather cold and Dow had one of those old fashioned large iron kettles. He hung it on the long coupling pole he had on his wagon that stuck out quite a little farther than the back end of the wagon box. It had burned down enough to be pretty well filled with live hot coals of fire and when our fingers got too cold we would

warm them up over the kettle. Those days people thought they had to drive straddle of the center row of corn, leaving two standing rows on either side of the wagon. That made a so-called down row that the wagon broke down. That was a boy's job, as you had to be in a stooping posture all the while when picking the down row. This made a man's back ache and it didn't matter if the boy's back got tired.

All right, Dows' wife was a wonderful cook and could make such good flour biscuits and I expect had a chicken cooked for dinner. She was like a mother to me so I like to work there a few days. No doubt, they give me fifty cents when I left besides by board and that was pretty good as there was not much money to be had in those times. My memory is on the Jack Davis farm, when their little girl Janey died. Dow nearly lost his mind over it and repeatedly said Janey couldn't be dead. I remember of her burial in the Xenia cemetery.

I can go back to when Dow Davis must have been assessor, or at least was overseeing the working out of the Poll Taxes as they had to do in those days. I can recall Dow being on that work more than his taxes would have been. The reason I remember is that I liked to drive horses and I think I drove his some. I would not have been old enough to have been taxed myself.

Our family moved to DeSoto in 1875 and after living there a year or so, I returned to the Valley at the age of 10 or 11 and stayed until 1888 when I married Carrie B. Pierce. We moved to Fort Morgan, Colorado where I worked as a night telegrapher on the Union Pacific Railroad. We came back to the Woodward area where I worked at various railroad jobs in several different towns. For 23 years we lived in Des Moines. In 1934 we moved back to our Valley bringing a family now consisting of wife Carrie, and five children: Hazel, born 1889, George Edgar, born 1890, Grace, born 1892, Clyde Lester, born 1894, and Glenn born 1899. Son Edgar of Perry and daughter Grace of Cleveland, Ohio survive at this writing.

During my time in Woodward from 1934 to 1963, I recall that a crippled man named Charley Burrel was running an oil station in Woodward and later built a home near the old Nicolet Park between the park and Ogden. It was just south of Highway No. 30 on the west side of the Des Moines River. He later had some sort of a government job and later still bought the Dow Davis land where Dow lived the last I knew. I have no dates on when he bought or when the land was sold.

I knew Francis Horton and was with him a time or so and knew of him always as an election clerk. He was always considered by all as being an honest, reliable citizen and a likeable man. I was also well acquainted with the son that went to Nebraska and Adam who was the Horton that lived in Woodward and his wife was fatally burned.

I now recall a Melbourne Davis, that was Dow's son,

and he lived in Woodward before he died. There is some history to that, too, which you may know all about. He lost a leg from the knee down. I think it was from hopping trains on the Milwaukee as they were slowly climbing the hills out of the Valley. I think that must have happened when I was away or I would have known more of it.

There were many things that happened in the valley that I could have overlooked. I have already mixed history up some with other things and you will have to make what you can out of it. Again I can recall when Bob Irving owned the land where Ting Wilson is and that he traded it to Thomas Gordon for land that Gordon owned and farmed near Jolly, Iowa. Later the coal mines and the clay works boomed things and Tom Gordon put in a livery stable service. Before the railroad ran a spur down to the mine and clay works, there was hauling galore with team and wagon loading cars.

There was an earlier date when the railroad bought and had hundreds of cords of four foot lengths of wood piled along the tracks. I recall when there was a tread mill run by placing horses on a slanting wood floor with cleets acrosswise so the horses' feet would not slide from under them. The floor traveled in belt form over wood rollers and the horses were traveling up hill so to speak and the power was governed by the slant of the floor. They did not dare let it run without using the saw or it would go faster and faster, so there was a brake to be pulled on by a lever nearby. Car loads and car loads were put up in this manner and shipped to different round houses where the wood was used as a started kindling and coal fire in firing up the locomotives.

We are back in the Valley again, say where the railroad entered the Valley at a point going eastward and crossing the creek, known as the Watson branch, and going from that point to the west end of the railroad bridge crossing the Des Moines River. The stone pier of the "Brickly" bridge stands yet in 1965 and is just west of the now Billy Wilson farm home. I do not have the date for this, but there was a man named John Watson who built a home at the top of the hill, just east of the new Don Wright home in the earlier days. He raised a family of seven boys. John Watson lost his life being killed by a train while walking across this bridge, which was rather a long bridge — say some two hundred feet. People, in walking to Woodward or Madrid, took to the railroad to avoid mud roads. Mr. Watson was crossing this bridge when a train approached from the west, surprising him. Yet he had the presence of mind to lay face down and flat at the outer end of the bridge ties and would have been safe, had he not have raised his head. The engineer of the locomotive saw him and said Mr. Watson raised his head and some part of the under part of the train threw his body through the air to the creek bed below, killing him, of course, instantly. This bridge took its name from the contractor who finished the grade between it and the west end

of the Des Moines River bridge. Brickley was his name and his camp and home were on the north side of the right of way. We might add a little more to history here if one cared for it. The railroad was finished into Madrid from the east. I might mention here that Madrid was there long before the railroad and its former name was Sweed Point. Its name was changed by a party named Gaston having a grudge at Sweed Point, so he applied to the government for the change in name and it went through all right. That story is complete in a two volume history of Boone County. The grading of the hollows and cutting down of the hills was washed out one or more times during its construction between Woodward and the Des Moines River. The survey chosen those days from the river west was in the Watson Branch from the river to Woodward. During a freshet, such as was had at that time, believe it or not, there were good sized trees, along with wheel barrows, scrapers and wagons scattered along the way. And what would appeal to us as a joke nowadays, the winter weather came and froze the ground and the work was postponed until the following spring!

All the long piling for the railroad bridge and all the long 10 x 12 inch square pine timbers were hauled from the Woodward site by horse team and wagon to the bridge location and across the Des Moines River and across the bottom land. The west half mile of the bridge to the highland on the west was built with piling. The piling was driven in the ground as long as the wood, which had to be a depth of so many feet, or as long as they would go — we will say two inches to the stroke of the pile driver, raising a 1500 pound hammer and dropping it on the pile head. Then the piling was sawn off to a level for the first cross timber for the bent was placed with the proper number of uprights. Then the upper cross tie was supported with stringers from bent to bent. They supported the cross ties for the rail iron track to rest upon. This part of the pile bridge was about one half mile long beside the span bridge across the main stream. I recall that the large stones used for the buttments and piers of the bridge were procured near the north end of the Valley and hauled by team and wagon southward. One stone was a load for a trip and two trips per day was all they could make, but they were getting as was paid on the grading, which was three dollars for man and team per day. Even farmers would find that more profitable than farming.

Because the ending of the story of our Valley was written some time ago at my then age of 99, I am adding a very important happening to the territory as of January 1968 and at the writer's present age of 101 years as of October 2, 1967.

The Government is building the Saylorville Dam four miles north of Des Moines which, when in force, would make the water twenty feet deep above the floor of the bridge which crosses the Des Moines River between Woodward and Madrid, Iowa, on Highway No. 89. This would be the north end

of the two mile long territory described in the History of the Valley.

Louis Rhoads would have been owner of 40 acres at the north end and would have been the owner for many years. David Lease would have been a seven acre owner, also perhaps Wm. Ruth with some 30 acres. Next would have been the pioneer owner of some eighty acres, later known as the Jack Davis farm. Some small holdings following thence the Aunt Nancy Tabor farm. Next the Uncle Wm. Chestnut farm which bordered on the Chestnut Ford, named the Chestnut Ford Bridge on an east and west section line which, if followed west, took you out of the Valley. My latest memory of the ownership of the Chestnut farm would have been Robert Siglin of Woodward, Iowa.

Now the Tabor farm was purchased many years ago by a Mr. John Wallace and I think later a Mr. Wm. H. Newland became the owner and who may still be the owner at this date.

There was a parcel of ground between the Chestnut and Davis lands owned by different early day holders namely: Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Winslow Davis with the east and south strip between the Tabor farm on the south and the then Jack Davis farm owned by Mr. Ervin. Mr. Ervin traded it to a Mr. Thomas Gordon for some Calhoun county farm. Thomas Gordon must have moved into the Valley about the year 1890 and the title later went into the hands of Gordon's daughter and husband, John Wilson, who still reside there.

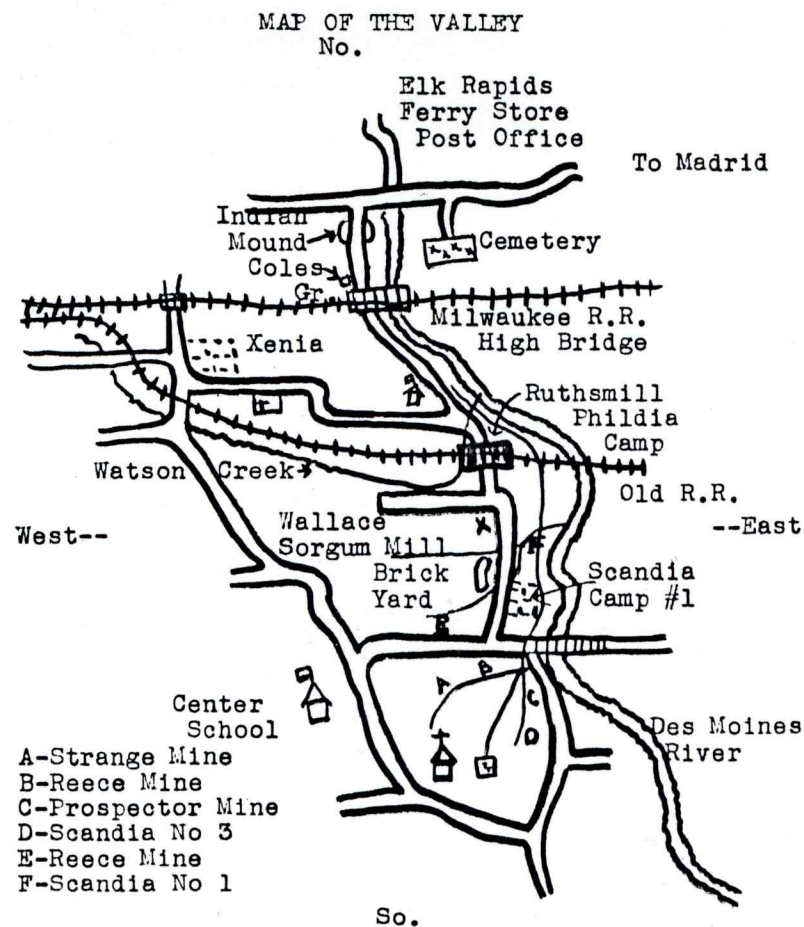
The familiar places and memories will soon be buried under a lake of water which will be built up in the valley by the huge earthen Saylorville Dam.

As water seeks its level, so will it seek the dark passages tunneled by the miners. Men and mules hauled tons of coal over the little underground tracks to the opening of the mine where cages raised it to the surface. Farmers and town people came for miles by horse and wagon for coal to burn in their stoves.

Those who enjoyed searching for arrow heads after a rain will soon find the little branches leading to the river a back water only good for boat ramps.

The cemetery by the Milwaukee bridge has been moved to wherever relatives wished their remains taken, and even the Coles' graves, high on a hill beneath the bridge (marked by Scouts historical markers) are threatened, but relatives as yet have not been located.

One by one homes are being vacated as settlements are made. On March first, 1968, the land becomes the ownership of the U.S. Government. Can any amount of compensation pay for a lifetime of living in familiar surroundings, which hold the memories of our ancestors, covers the pathway of Indians who sought their living from hunting and fishing, in a valley as full of folklore as any spot within our Nation.



DALLAS COUNTY

