

# A GOODLY HERITAGE

BY

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*"THE LINES HAVE FALLEN FOR ME IN PLEASANT  
PLACES: YES, I HAVE A GOODLY HERITAGE." Ps 16. v 6.*

The Holy Bible  
Revised Standard Version  
An Ecumenical Edition  
Collins, N.Y. 1973

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## A GOODLY HERITAGE

*Tracing the history of my Irish-American mother and my Volga-German father who both settled on the plains of Kansas in the last quarter of the 19th century.*

AGNES MAGRANE came to Kansas, April 18, 1879, age 6

JOSEPH SCHAEFER came to Kansas, June 20, 1878, age 17

They were married in Hays, Kansas, May 30, 1893

I have taken the liberty to use much material from early Hays newspapers without acknowledging sources for the most part, and often without using quotation marks, since this saga is meant for the "edification" of family and is not meant for publication.

## FOREWARD

I wrote this story about my ancestors about a year and a half ago to please myself, to satisfy my curiosity about how "all the pieces" fit together.

And it was from these "pieces" that this story unfolded.

Mother had kept data on births and deaths in her own family as well as ours. My sisters Margaret and Agnes had some newspaper clippings, but most of the information came from my brother Victor. For years he came to Hays from South Bend, Indiana, to read the earliest newspapers of the city of Hays on microfilm in the Fort Hays State University Library. He was gathering material on the Schaefer-Magrane ancestors for a book he intended to write. He copied copiously - news stories, editorials, and feature stories, and some of these became the sources of my story.

Since I was the second youngest of a family of 12, as was my mother in her family, and my father in his, I was quite far removed from knowing my ancestors in person, and I didn't hear much about them as I was growing up, either. (I feel cheated!)

I make no pretensions about making this story a definitive family history. There is much between the lines, and we will be making revisions and additions as we learn more about the family. Bob Schaefer is doing a lot of research. Victor is the original researcher and historian, and I trust him to offer you a truly accurate and detailed history.

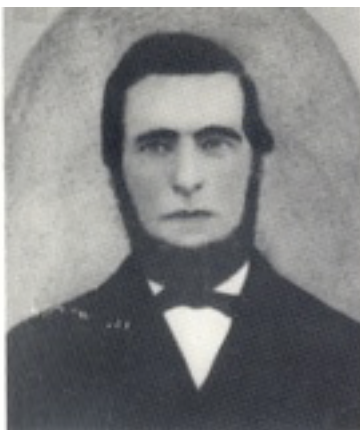
May 1995

With some additions and revisions made in January 2010

## MAGRANE GRANDPARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

Grandmother Alice Murphy was born April 4, 1833, the eighth of 12 children, at Seneca Falls, New York, where she grew to womanhood. She was the daughter of Patrick Murphy (1777-1854) and Mary Campbell (1797-1865) both of County Louth, Parish Carlingford, Grange Chapel, Ireland.

On March 2, 1851, she was married at Waterloo, New York to Grandfather Patrick Magrane, born March 17, 1824, in Rathcur, County Louth, Ireland. He was the eighth and last child of James Magrane and Sally Doyle (no dates available) of County Louth, Parish Carlingford, Grange Chapel, Ireland. Patrick had come to the United States on June 1, 1846 on the "Maine" by way of Liverpool, England.



Patrick and Alice Magrane made their home near Seneca Falls, New York until 1853 when they boarded ship at the New York harbor bound for California. With them was their year-old son, James Henry, who was born May 16, 1852. They chose to travel via the Isthmus of Panama rather than by the shorter but more dangerous overland route. After a

two-month trip they arrived in California, went first to Sacramento and then to San Jose. Later they located in San Andreas. Patrick found work at the Mare Island Navy yards. For a long period of time Alice was the only white American woman to live in the colony; the other women were Mexican and Chinese.

After some five years, the couple returned to their former home near Seneca Falls, again by way of the Isthmus of Panama. With them were three additional children: Mary Elizabeth, born July 16, 1855, Thomas Patrick, born May 28, 1857, both born at San Andreas, and William Henry, born February 8, 1859, at Vallejo, California. During the following eight years while they lived near or in Seneca Falls, three more children joined their brothers and sisters: Sarah Ann on September 17, 1861 at Romulous, N.Y., John F. on December 21, 1863 at Ovid, N.Y., and Alice Loretta on September 15, 1865 at Seneca Falls. John F. died in early childhood on March 18, 1866 in Seneca Falls.

In 1866 the family went West to a locality near Green Bay, Wisconsin, known as Mitchell, in Sheboygan county. Here they remained for the next 13 years and farmed. Four more children were born here: Ellen Cecilia on June 16, 1868, John Francis (second child with that name) on May 3, 1871, AGNES CLARA on August 13, 1873, and Patrick, who lived only a few weeks from August 26, 1876 to September 9, 1876.

When Patrick's health declined he was advised to settle in a drier climate. Consequently, seven Magranes made another move, their last, to Hays, Kansas. They arrived in blowing wind and sand at two o'clock in the

morning of April 18, 1879. Fortunately, their eldest son, Jim, who had gone to Hays the previous year to find work, was there to meet them. He provided overnight quarters for them with good, clean, comfortable beds. The next day, the family found two rooms in the upstairs of the Land Office. Here they stayed only two days as the wind and storms so rocked the building that they felt that they would not get out alive. Finally they got two rooms in a nearby house. Eventually they found a house of their own.

The promised "good air" of Kansas did not restore Patrick's health and he died July 4, 1879, at the age of 55, a few months after his arrival in Hays. Mother Alice Magrane, who was just 46, was left to provide for the large family at a time when frontier life was full of dangers and hardships. The youngest child, AGNES, was just six years old.

Before he died, Patrick had bought a tract of land, 160 acres, a man's pre-emption, five miles south of Hays. He had also invested in teams, wagons, and plows, and whatever else was needed to start farming. Jim and Tom, the eldest sons, started farming with much enthusiasm, but, unfortunately, without the much needed rain. Farming was a real chore as the boys had to haul water a mile and a half for four or five horses, a cow and a calf. Coal also had to be hauled from wherever it could be found. They even scoured the area for "buffalo chips." In a few years, the family gave up farming and moved to town, moving also the four-room house which Alice had built on the farm.

The children set about finding work to add to the family income. JAMES HENRY, the eldest had come to Hays about a year before his parents

and had "roughed it." In time he operated a livery and feed stable. The Red Barn, as it came to be known, was considered to be, perhaps, the oldest in the county. It was reported that he ran a first-class stable, bought and sold ponies as well as nice buggies. When the town of McCracken was started in 1886, Jim started a branch livery barn there. Later his brother Will joined him there and took charge. For a number of years Jim also served as bailiff at the courthouse. He was married twice, first to Mary(Nellie)Purdell (Purtell) in January 1881. She died in September of the same year. On January 7, 1885 he married Lizzie Carroll. After he was widowed the second time, he lived with his sisters, first with Ella Penney, and after the Penneys moved to Lawrence, with Mary Jordan. Jim died at a Larned hospital, April 23, 1923 and was buried beside his daughters Nellie and Margaret in St. Joseph cemetery, Hays. His first wife and their son, who died some 20 years earlier, had been buried in Denver where they were living at the time.

MARY ELIZABETH, the eldest daughter, was married to John F. Jordan (b. 1847 in Whitehall, Vermont) in Cascade, Wisconsin, July 25, 1875 before the Magranes came to Kansas. They lived there some 25 years where Mr. Jordan was engaged in railroad work with the Chicago and Northwestern, and the Chicago Milwaukee, St Paul railroads. In 1903 they moved to Kansas where Mr Jordan went into the furniture business, a business he continued for 15 years. From newspaper accounts, it seems that Mary worked in the post office at the time Harvey Penney, Ella's future husband, was the postmaster. The newspaper account noted that she was meticulous in keeping the office orderly and clean and seldom gave more than a mild

reproof when the sweeping was done poorly. She was always "kindly, considerate, and friendly" and rich in friends.

Two sons were born of that marriage, Dr Will, a dentist and DeLisle who died at age four. A daughter died in infancy. The son, Will Jordan, practiced dentistry first in Hays and then in Kansas City. The Kansas City Star noted that he was one of the first dentists in the territory who interested himself in movable plate work and was chosen as manager of the Deaner Institute for dental research. He had married Cathryn Markley from whom he was later divorced. They had no children. Dr Jordan died in 1923, one year short of 79 years. Mary Jordan died September 29, 1934 at age 79. Her husband had died in Hays in 1924 after a long illness.

THOMAS PATRICK spent most of his life in Chicago. He had married Margaret Raidy (b.1/13/62) in Eden, Wisconsin, Oct 10, 1883. They had four children: Thomas Owen, (8/24/84); Alice (3/19/87) who married Fred Bowman; Clara,(6/27/88) who married Fred Haffamier of Hays; and William, (10/17/90) who married Maude Barnett. Thomas died in Chicago, April 29, 1933. We do not have any account of Tom except that he was a member of the Chicago police department.

WILLIAM HENRY, fourth child, as a 19 year old, went from the farm in Wisconsin to Manistee where he was employed to drive logs down the Manistee River. After an accident, he went in 1884 to Chicago and became a railway switchman for the Illinois Central. He joined the Magrane family in Hays about 1887 and in the following year went into the livery and hotel business in McCracken where brother Jim had established a branch livery service. Here he met and married Ella (Nellie) Purcell, June 19,1888. After a



few years he moved to Texas where a baby boy was born. Soon he went to Indian territory and followed various trades, and on to Oklahoma, eventually returning to Michigan where he established a lumber business. He next married a Jeanie Day in Luther, Michigan July 3, 1898. In the spring of 1904, they moved to Tustin, Michigan, where they ran the Tustin House Hotel for a year and then moved to Dighton to work. They moved back to Tustin to take possession of the Hotel Compton on March 16, 1906. On that same night-morning, a fire broke out in the hotel into which they had just moved, and they and two workmen were burned to death. It was thought that the fire started from the furnace over which their bedroom was located, and spread rapidly through the wooden structure.

SARAH ANN (Sadie) decided to teach school to help provide for the family. However, there was no school district and no school house, nor did she have a teaching certificate. This did not deter her. She visited with the county superintendent, a Dr. Gochenour, stating her proposal to organize a school district in the area. He advised her to secure enough signatures to petition the opening of a school. Having done that, she had to find a place to hold school. She ended up teaching in an upstairs room of the Magrane home. The superintendent had given her a temporary permit to teach with the understanding that she would get a certificate later. She received a salary of \$20 a month which was enough to provide board for the family. After her first year of teaching, she attended public school, passed the required test, and won her teaching certificate. She taught for three more years in the Munjor school system. Her sister Alice (Allie) also taught for

several years in nearby towns. Sarah resigned because of poor health and found work in the post office.

From Sarah's accounts published in the Hays newspaper, we learn that though pioneer life was difficult, it was not all work. In the winter when the snow was abundant, the young folks went sleigh-riding. Part of the fun was hitting the hay stacks and getting tumbled into the snow. Visiting the enlisted soldiers at Fort Hays was another social pastime. Eventually, Sarah quit her job at the post office to marry one of the enlisted men, Richard Ryan, (b.12/12/1860) on November 23, 1886. Mr. Ryan died in Chicago (12/6/1897) after a lingering illness. The couple had a son Joe (8/26/88) and a daughter Mary (10/31/90) who married Fred Rea on Oct 31,1912. Sarah opened a millinery store in 1903. She married Alois Bissing, May 13, 1903 with whom she had a son, John. Mr Bissing died July 20, 1920. Sarah died after a short illness at the home of her daughter, Mary Rea, in Plattsmouth, Nebraska, June 7, 1932 and was buried in Hays.

JOHN FRANCIS, the next child died March 18,1866 when he was three years old.

ALICE LORETTA, called Allie, met Ed Glennon (b.9/3/59) of Plainville, Kansas when he came to Hays to find work there. They were married in Hays, January 12, 1886. Allie had taught school for a few years before her marriage. Their marriage was short-lived as Allie died on June 12, 1887, after a week's illness following the birth of a baby girl. She was just 21 years of age. The town was shocked and saddened by Allie's death. The newspaper recorded that hers was the largest funeral ever seen in the city, showing how deeply the Magranes, and especially this popular couple, were held in

affection. After a few more years, Ed moved back to Plainville where he died December 8, 1922. His daughter Alice (b.6/4/87) had married Gustave Husson, June 27,1908, formerly of New York, but employed in Plainville. The couple eventually made their home in Rochester, New York.

ELLEN CECILIA, or Ella as she was generally called, worked in the post office and was joined by her sister Sarah for about a year and a half. The young women's work hours were determined by train time, not clock time, no eight-hour days. If trains were late, the women stayed on the job until the mail was taken care of. A newspaper account related what happened when a severe blizzard came through in 1885-86. All rail travel stopped for about ten days. No mail came through, of course. When the first train finally came in, on January 12, 1886, it was the day of their sister Alice's wedding to Ed Glennon. But wedding or not, the mail had to be taken care of. They finished their work in time for the wedding, however, and went dancing until near morning.

Ella next went to work in the U.S. Land Office in Wakeeney nearby for several years. She then ran for office of Register of Deeds on the Democratic ticket along with six men. She won the nomination to the surprise of everyone except the Republicans it was told. She was appointed in September of 1889 when she was just 21 years old. On February 4, 1885, she married Harvey James Penney (b.10/12/65) who had come to Russell, Kansas, with his parents from New Jersey. He had moved to Hays in 1894. Harvey was the Hays postmaster for 12 years and throughout his years in the area dealt in real estate business, and became a wealthy landowner. He became the proprietor of the Hotel Brunswick in 1894 which was considered

to be the "most imposing and handsome structure in the country" noted especially for the handsome staircase, which won the admiration of all. This hotel was the scene of many receptions and social events. When the Penneys entertained guests there, the newspaper reported the event as the high point of the social life of the city.

When the Penney's four children, Elvin (b.2/13/86), Gerald (b. 2/20/91), Alice (b.1/31/1900), and Eileen (b.9/5/1903) were getting to be of college age, they moved to Lawrence so their children could get a university education. Their fifth son, Theodore was born March 3, 1905 and died August 22 of the same year. Harvey died July 3, 1936 at age 70, the result of an earlier heart attack. His loss was greatly felt as he had been most active and involved in civic affairs throughout western Kansas. Ella died seven years later on October 13, 1943 in Lawrence at the home of one of her daughters with whom she had been making her home. She had made her last visit to Hays in May of that year when she had attended the fiftieth wedding anniversary of JOE AND AGNES SCHAEFER. Ella had been her sister Agnes' bridesmaid. Ella's two sons preceded her in death. Surviving her were Alice (b.1/31/1900) who married Dr. Frank Menehan, and Eileen (b. 9/5/1903) who married Ferol C Stevens.

JOHN FRANCIS, the second child to be named John after the death of the first John, was married to Alice Rosemon Harvey at Berlin, Wisconsin, February 17, 1898. There are no accounts of him available except that he died in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, July 28, 1955.

AGNES CLARE was born second last. (Baby PATRICK, the last child, was born August 26,1876, and lived but a few weeks until September 13,

1876.) Agnes was born on August 13, 1873, and came to Kansas with her parents at age six. Oral tradition provides most of what we know of her life. She attended the local school and also took music lessons which prepared her to play the organ for church services later on. Her appreciation for music influenced all her children, as each in turn, learned the keyboard as well as other instruments as they were growing up. The family piano on which all dutifully practiced was an ornate, mahogany, upright Chickering presented to Agnes by her husband a few months after their marriage.

One evening while he and Agnes were visiting Mother Magrane, friends moved the piano into the home from the depot where it had been shipped from Leavenworth. The tables were loaded with goodies, the lights were lowered. When their friends heard the turn of the key in the door, they flashed on the lights and the piano sounded "Home, Sweet Home." It was a great surprise party! Today that piano resides in the house across the street from the home which the Schaefer later built and is played by the Hantla children.

Agnes had attended Normal School to be a teacher. Having earned her teacher's certificate, she was hired to conduct the Toulon school, a few miles east of Hays, which was owned by the railroad. She laughingly recalled that she was a teacher "with a break" as far as money was concerned, since she received the highest salary in the area, \$40 a month. Only the railroad could afford the "high salaries." She boarded with families of her students during the week and came back to Hays over the weekends when the weather permitted. At times, JOE SCHAEFER, her future husband, would come for her on horseback to take her to Hays. School teaching in those days, she would

say, included all the chores of the building. She had to get to school early to build the fire before the children arrived, and she had to stay late to make sure the school house was properly cleaned for the next day.

On May 30, 1893, she and Joe were married. (More in the next portion of the family story.)

Grandmother Magrane died March 24, 1908, leaving seven children as well as a host of friends to mourn their loss. She was almost 75 years old. Her obituary in the Hays News of March 26, 1908 spoke highly of her.

Mrs. Magrane educated and reared her children as best she could giving them especially the most telling lessons of life's earnestness and reality by her truly Christian example. Her life with its trials, hardships, and struggles is known to the early settlers of Hays.

In November previous to her death, Grandmother Magrane had become seriously ill, but by the latter part of January she had recovered and was up and about, due to the kind attention of her physician and especially that of her daughter, Ella, with whom she had made her home. On March 19, St Joseph's Day, after having attended Mass, she became very ill again and never rallied. Five days later, at age 74 years, 11 months, and 20 days, she died quietly and peacefully as she had lived, surrounded by her daughters, their husbands and near relatives of Hays. Her obituary had more to say of her:

Mrs. Magrane will best be remembered as a type of the valient,(sic) cheerful, encouraging souls, who have gentle ears to listen to the trials of others, and kind words to soothe. She will be remembered as a true Christian woman, who during her long life generously contributed her share to the moral advancement of humanity by her truly Christian, staunchly Catholic life.

## GRANDFATHER SCHAEFER AND FAMILY

Grandfather Andreas Schaefer was born in Kamenka, Russia, on April 11, 1801. His father was Franz Schaefer, born in 1745 in Germany, at a location not known. He had come to Kamenka on June 7, 1765, when he was about 20 years old.



Franz married Ann Margaret Ditz or Dietz (1768), who was the daughter of Philip Ditz (1711) and Barbara, surname unknown who was born in 1735. They had three children, Josef, Andreas, and Ann Christine. Franz died sometime between 1798-1816. An old record states that "in 1798 Franz Saferius (Francis Xavier) Schaefer paid all state debts and received a passport which permitted him to live free." In this colony he did not have any land but was a small-scale merchant.

Grandfather Andreas was married twice. The children by his first wife, Margaret Wissner (d.(7/9/1846) were Appolonia and Barbara. His second wife was Catherine Stang, born March 15, 1820. They were the parents of nine children, one of whom was JOSEPH about whom this story is written. The nine children were: Anna Maria (8/24/1847), Catherine (7/10/1850), George (8/18/1852), Barbara (3/21/1853), Elizabeth (2/21/1854), Joseph (4/5/1859), JOSEPH (1/6/1861), Christina (9/29/1863), and Andrew (2/15/1866).

Next to nothing is known of the lives of the Schaefers in Russia. They were a part of that number of German people who had been invited by the



Russians to settle in the Volga region as farmers or small merchants. Hence the name "Volga Germans" was used to designate this group of immigrants to the United States.

Andreas died in Kamenka, Russia, August 31, 1870, but not without leaving a will providing for his family. This will is still in the possession of Victor Schaefer's son Michael. (Incidentally, I found that the name "Kamenka" means little stone.)

Andreas' widow Catherine, born in 1822, came to the United States at age 56, with her children on the S.S. Donau, departing from Bremen, Germany, and arriving in New York on June 8, 1878. The eldest daughter, Anna Marie had already married Jacob Wiesner in Russia in 1865 and she and her husband would not be coming to the States until June 24, 1879. They were the parents of thirteen children. Anna Marie died 11/4/1927. Catherine also married in Russia and came to the States with her son, Alexander, after her husband, Alexander Resch, died.

Very little is known about the family in the early years after they came to Kansas. They first settled in Pfeifer, Kansas, in Rush County, June 20, 1878. They purchased 240 acres in Rush County from the Kansas Pacific Railway for \$540 on June 25, 1878, and lived on that farm until they sold it, February 5, 1885, for \$1500.

GEORGE, the eldest son, had married Elizabeth Neuman in Russia before he came with his mother to the States. He was a merchant and salesman. They had ten children. After living in Hays for several years, the family moved to Chicago where George died in 1939.

BARBARA entered the convent of the Third Order of St. Francis in Peoria, Illinois, in 1884, and was known by the name of Sister Apollonia. She died January 10, 1912.

ELIZABETH married Joseph Basgall in Pfeifer, October 21, 1878. They moved to Hays where Joseph was a farm implement dealer and eventually a grocer. They had eleven children. Elizabeth died November 22, 1901.

JOSEPH was the second youngest child. (More in the next part)

ANDREW married Emma Alex of Chicago, May 17, 1887 in Hays. They had two sons and lived in Chicago most of their lives. Andrew died January 1943.

Grandmother Catherine Schaefer died September 16, 1913, in Hays, at the age of 93. For years she had been blind and was cared for at the home of her son Joseph and Agnes with whom she had made her home for many years. Nothing is known about the first Joseph and Christine.

## PARENTS JOSEPH SCHAEFER AND AGNES MAGRANE

Joseph Schaefer was 17 years old when he came to the United States from Russia. From 1872-1876 according to the report cards Victor had in his possession, Joseph had attended a secondary/preparatory school conducted by priests at Alexander-Marien Schule in Tiraspol, a distance of about 40 miles from his home in Kamenka. His course of studies included a wide range of subjects as attested by his report cards as well as by his notebooks which are still in the family possession. His studies included Latin, German, Russian, art, mathematics. His neat notebooks contain illustrations of his art work. This art was a forerunner of his hobby later in life - a pencil artist. A prized drawing of his was in son Victor's home, a beautiful dog keeping watch over a sleeping child in a flower bed of pansies. Joseph was an outstanding student and his report cards show that he always got the highest grades. Always a student, Joseph added French to his language skills when he traveled through French-speaking towns in northwestern Kansas as a traveling salesman in his early years at Hays.

Soon after the family settled in Pfeifer, Joseph looked for work in Hays, walking the 21 miles to get his first job as a clerk with J.J. Mittelmeier, himself a pioneer merchant who operated a general merchandise store on South Main now Ninth Street. A year or so later, Joseph became head clerk at Metz and Ramey, the largest general merchandise store in its day. He remained there for five years after which he went to Minneapolis, Kansas, where he held a similar position with Henry and Son for a few years.

About 1887 he took a job as a traveling salesman for a wholesale grocery company, Bittman, Taylor and Co. in Leavenworth, Kansas. For the next fifteen years he traveled extensively over western Kansas where "his genial and obliging ways made him many warm friends among the grocers of towns along the way," so reported in the newspapers.

It was during these years that he courted and married AGNES MAGRANE, but not until the newspapers all over the state had a little fun with him. It seems that Joe had jokingly announced that he would get married whenever he could find a young lady who had gathered enough postage stamps to paper her room.

Wherever Joe went the young ladies were busy collecting stamps from old envelopes, and it was said that he was



introduced to "many a beauty who wanted to marry him." After all, he had a splendid position as a salesman. For weeks the school children who loved their teacher, AGNES MAGRANE, and wanted her "to receive the prize" were busy gathering postage stamps. And so the saga ends with the Toulon school teacher winning "her man." Joe had first met Agnes when she used to come to the grocery store with her mother and he helped them with their shopping. At that time she was probably six or seven years old.

It wasn't until later when Joe became a salesman that the two met at social functions, became friends, and married.

Their marriage took place in a crowded St. Joseph Church in Hays, May 30, 1893, at nine o'clock in the morning. The church was beautifully decorated and the Bissing Orchestra played the wedding march as well as other service music. Agnes wore a white silk dress, trimmed with real orange blossoms sent from the East, and a long veil. It was said that she was the first bride at St. Joseph's to have worn white.



Joseph was attired in a black formal suit with tails. (The suit, still in excellent condition, was given to the Museum of the Kansas State Historical Society in Hays.) Their attendants were Ellen Magrane, the bride's sister, and Joseph Basgall, brother-in-law of the groom, also in full regalia. The bride's mother served the wedding breakfast for relatives in her home.

In the evening the couple boarded the train for their honeymoon to the White City, to the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition. The SMITHSONIAN of June 1993, a century later, stated that the "fair was a dry run for the mass marketing, packaging and advertizing of the 20th century." One can only guess whether the couple rode the original Ferris Wheel carrying 2000

passengers in cars in what was described as "small street cars." They certainly lived to see remarkable inventions, the automobile, the airplane, the radio, the "talkies" etc. but they would never have guessed at the dramatic changes seen after their deaths.

On their return to Hays after their short honeymoon, the couple made their home in the former C.C. Brosius home which Joe had bought



and remodeled before their marriage. This home, across the street from the Catholic Church, would undergo several more remodelings as the years went by and more children were born into the family.

Around 1900 the remodeling meant adding two bedrooms and a bath and putting in a hot water system.



THE HOME REMODELED AT ONE TIME  
(Hospital in the background)

In the summer of 1910 more remodeling was done in the living-dining area and the parlor. By 1924 a sun room was added as well as a new kitchen, breakfast room and bath.

They remained at this location until 1929 when they built a new home on 16th and Elm.



They had vacated their original home, with great reluctance at first, to make way for the the expansion of the hospital situated west of them. An east wing was added to the original hospital structure and the Schaefer home became a home for the nurses.

Joe and Agnes were the parents of twelve children, ten of whom reached adulthood.



They were Mary Zita (4/27/1894), Margaret Ida (12/26/1895), Leo Joseph (3/14/1898), Joseph Francis (4/21/1900), Agnes Cecilia (1/28/02), Richard (3/22/04) who died at age two, Victor Anthony (5/3/06), Paul Gregory (10/24/08), Theodore (12/22/10) who died at age five, Rita Edith (5/7/13), Louise (3/25/15), and George Robert 4/30/18.





Back: Mary      Victor                      Agnes                      Paul                      Margaret  
Front: Rita Dr. Joe   J.M. Schaefer      George Agnes Schaefer   Louise   Dr. Leo

At the insistence of his wife that he spend more time at home and with the children, and due also to the fact that he was elected to take the office of County Treasurer, Joe resigned from his 15 years traveling job for Bittman, Todd. Bittman himself wrote in the "Free Press" that "your citizens could not have selected a more honest, capable, or trustworthy man for the position of Treasurer than yourself." He was first elected on the Democratic ticket in 1902 and was re-elected for a second term in 1904.

In 1907 the "News", the weekly democratic organ of Ellis county was sold to a firm which listed Joseph Schaefer as a stockholder. Before he knew it, Joseph found himself the editor. In the occasional articles that he contributed, readers said that he was meticulous in his phraseology and in selecting words with the exact shade of meaning. His wife told their children that he was no less meticulous when he wrote letters to them. Joseph sought perfection in whatsoever he did. The editorship of the "News" required too much time away from the business he had just established, and so at the the first chance he stepped out as editor, and his three associates took over.

In 1911 Joe established a loan and abstract business, a business he conducted until 1940 when he sold the abstracting business to Wann and Field, still in business today. He had also begun to sell insurance in 1908, but this he sold in 1918 to the Citizens State Bank when the demands of his abstracting business became too heavy.

A story is told about a time he was selling insurance, when he was "hooked up" with a Hail Insurance Company which paid only 70% of its losses at the end of a certain season. Because this militated against Joe's sense of justice, he supplied the 30% losses to his patrons out of his own pocket. Later,he admitted that he could never do this again and survive financially.

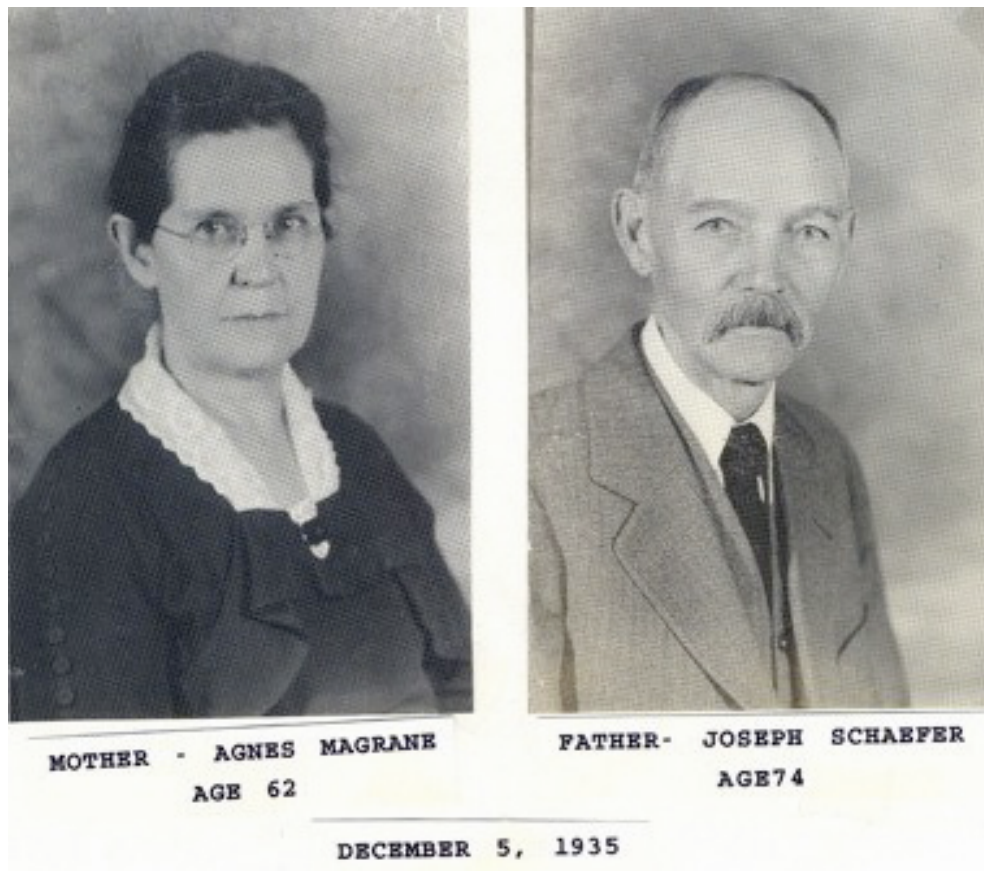
The city newspaper reported another story about this same time. Ever interested in his patrons, among whom were many farmers, he saw the devastation caused by a nearly total failure of the wheat crop, and,

consequently, a shortage of seed for 1911. Joseph made a proposition to the business men of the town to raise money for those farmers who needed help desperately. He offered \$500 "seed money" with \$5000 as a goal to help the needy. He proposed that a committee be formed to furnish seed to the needy farmers at such prices and on such terms as the committee would decide. There was no newspaper follow-up to this story but, hopefully, the plan was put into operation.

Soon after, about 1913, he was nominated by a group of citizens for mayor against his knowledge and wishes. He finally agreed to accept the nomination because "of the unwarranted and un-American fight against me" by a biased group " because I am a Catholic." He fought back saying that he spent his money with non-Catholics as well as Catholics. In fact, at the time the two young ladies in his employ were Methodists. One non-Catholic business man told Joe that without the Catholic trade he would not be able to stay in business. Joe argued that the opposition knew that under his administration graft would be "on the bum" and he would require 100% worth of work for every dollar paid out. He promised to reduce taxes as an inducement for outsiders to consider Hays a good place to live, and consequently, to help build up the educational institutions of the city. He promised to administer the affairs of the city "without prejudice to race, creed, color, or previous condition of servitude." He continued by saying he'd have no ill will if defeated in this office that he did not seek, and he would certainly be better off financially. If elected he would be satisfied that good friends put good government above politics.

The outcome? Joe was defeated by 20 votes and, subsequently, retired from politics but not from community affairs.

Joseph had threatened to retire many times before he actually did so in 1940.



Not many weeks after closing his office and upon the persuasion of his friend, Julius Bahl, he set up an office with his friend in the Schwaller building, once the site of the store where he had held his first job as a clerk. He had come full circle. Joe liked to be downtown where he could see his friends and have a place where he could look after his private business

affairs. His friends were equally happy to have him "come back downtown" and remarked that "it would seem more like home with this pioneer business man" at his own desk in his office.

The Ellis County News of December 4, 1941, commenting on Joe's retirement wrote that "he and Mrs. Schaefer have reared a fine family and provided all their children with a good education. Mr. Schaefer has well earned and provided for his retirement from active business. This is a fine way to wind up a successful business career. Such is the goal of many a person but few reach it. Many men look forward to and hope for the day that they may be independent and do some of the things for themselves and their families for which there was not always time in business life. For Mr. Schaefer we hope that he will enjoy good health and happiness for many more years."

Joe himself liked to reminisce about the sixty years he was in business, recalling the contributions of all the earliest pioneers, the settlers of the 1860's and '70s, the farmers, the business men. He said "they were honest men, a good people, they lived within their means, and always paid their debts...They built up this western country." Joe himself was one of these people. In all the years he was in business he was active in civic affairs. Among his proudest achievements was his work as chairman of the Liberty Loan Drives during World War I. He was recognized for his efforts in putting Ellis County "over the top."

Because he was one of the very few Volga Germans who could read and write the Russian language, he was able to help many of the pioneers by

reading their mail to them and writing their letters to their relatives in Russia. Joe became their trusted friend and counselor. For a time he served as consultant to the Russian Consulate in Chicago to aid people in obtaining passports or in sending money to their friends and relatives in Russia.

In 1943, Joseph had his first airplane ride, to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. He was 84 at the time. Son, Dr. Joseph, who was working at the Clinic at that time, flew down to pick him up, and they enjoyed dinner 5 hours later in Rochester. On his return, again by air, but this time in 2 hours to Kansas City, his son, Dr. Leo, met him in Kansas City and brought him home. When he was asked about this experience of flying, his comment was, "It's the only way to go."

On May 30, 1943, Joseph and Agnes celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in St. Joseph Church where they had been married, surrounded by their children and grandchildren and many friends.



Photo on right: Not present for family picture  
Sisters Mary Felix (Rita) and Rosaria (Louise) Schaefer

Joseph and Agnes had seen great growth in the city of Hays during those years but also lived through many disasters. The great blizzard of 1886 with drifts 10 feet high crippled the entire state and threatened the delivery of food and fuel supplies. There was the fire of 1895, the tornado of 1918, the flu epidemic of 1918 when brother Joseph in ROTC almost died, the Hays gas explosion of 1919, the devastating dust storms of the 30's, and finally the damaging flood of 1951 which wiped out many homes in south Hays.

After several years of failing health, the last month of which he was critically ill at St. Anthony Hospital, Joseph died, May 8, 1947, at age 86. During those last weeks all the children had visited him at various times. His wife and nine children and 22 grandchildren survived him. Preceding him in death were his children Mary Brungardt (7/8/25), and two children who had died in infancy, Richard (3/10/06), and Theodore (2/26/15).

Eleven years later, Agnes died unexpectedly at home on Sunday, June 17, 1958, after an illness of only two hours. She had lived a few months short of 85 years. She had been in frail health for several years but not seriously ill. On the day of her death she had attended Mass, and in the evening had been out for a ride with her daughters. A few hours later she suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. With her when she died were her daughters, Agnes, who made her home with her, Margaret Herrman who lived only a few blocks away, and Sisters Mary Felix and Rosaria who had arrived only a few days earlier from Atchison for a visit. Surviving were also five sons: Dr. Leo, Dr. Joe, Victor, Paul and George.



Of greatest importance in the lives of Joseph and Agnes was their religion and the practice of their faith. Joe was a devout Catholic, a man of firm convictions, a leader in church organizations and most interested in the welfare of his parish to which he contributed generously both in time and money. He served on the St. Joseph church committee for more years than any of his family could remember. He was a charter member of the Knights of Columbus, served as Grand Knight, and attained the fourth degree. He was a life-long member of the Holy Name Society.

During her married life, Agnes gave an ever-willing hand and heart to church and community needs. She belonged to the Altar Society and served as president for 15 consecutive years. She was a faithful member of the Hospital Auxiliary. A newspaper account remarked that her whole life was "characterized by a kindly interest in her neighbors, her friends, the city of Hays, and a devotion to her family and to her religion which was paramount to everything else." A close friend said she never heard Mrs. Schaefer say an unkind thing of anyone, a memory generally held among those who knew her well. She was a truly great Christian woman, an example to her children.

Both Joe and Agnes took great pride in their home and the yard. They had a great appreciation of beauty in nature, the yard, the beautiful flower garden, the shrubs and trees. Joe saw to it that there was no better kept lawn than his in the city. And greatly to their credit, they saw that their children were well-provided for and well-educated that they might make their ways successfully through life.

Addendum to the Chapter on  
"Parents Joseph and Agnes Schaefer"

By Sister Rosaria Schaefer

December 2007

When I first wrote the story tracing the history of my parents in "A Goodly Heritage," I used my brother Victor's information that my father Joseph had attended a secondary school in Tiraspol, which was about 40 miles from his home in Kamenka. Actually the school was in Saratov, a town in the diocese of Tiraspol. I remember hearing the older members of the family saying that this school was a seminary. And so it was. Was Joseph originally studying for the priesthood?

Recently, Bob Schaefer gave me the name of a book he had come across as a good reference about the Volga Germans in Russia. This book entitled "From Catherine to Khrushchev" by Adam Giesinger, not only answered some of the questions about Joseph's schooling but also gave me additional insight into life in Russia.

The seminary referred to was founded in 1857 in Saratov by Bishop Kahn who resided in that city. There he hoped to train badly needed priests for his diocese of Tiraspol.

This minor seminary was the only institution in Russia providing secondary education for the German Catholics. Not all the boys who attended it ended up as priests. The school was also open to talented sons of the poor for whom scholarships were available. I can only presume that it

was a scholarship that enabled Joseph to attend that school. But how was it that Joseph, the second youngest son, had the opportunity to attend school at Saratov, a school at a great distance from home?

When Joseph's father died in 1870, his oldest Brother George became his guardian. George must have recognized his brother's talents and so arranged for him to continue his education. We do not know. It was George who signed all his report cards from 1872-1876. Joseph received the highest marks in all his studies.

We do not know how Joseph traveled to and from his home to Saratov. There were no railways. The author Giesinger's explanation may have the answer. He wrote that many boys who attended school had to stay away from home for years while they were getting their education. This must have been a real trial for those studying, especially for one as young as Joseph, as well as for his family at home.