

# Wiles Family Reaches Far Back Into Iowa and Nebraska History

(Editor's Note: The Wiles family reunion was held Sunday, Aug. 14, at the park in Weeping Water. Here is a history of the family, written by a relative.)

by Donald Beckman

The first member of the Wiles family in the United States was Luke who settled in North Carolina. He was of the Quaker or Friend faith.

In North Carolina he married Frances Clanton. They had nine children. Of these Thomas is the one who settled in the west and help build it up as well as his children did. He was born in 1796 and died in 1873.

In 1818, Thomas Wiles and Elizabeth Hobson whose descendants went back four more generations in the United States than did Thomas, brought before the weekly meeting of the Quakers at the Deep Creek Meeting House, Surrey County, North Carolina, their desire to marry. It was the custom for the Quakers to do this.

A committee was then appointed to look into the affairs of Thomas to see that he was cleared for marriage. Another was appointed to look into the affairs of Elizabeth. They were both cleared for marriage and were married in 1816 at the meeting house. After their marriage was chosen to accompany the young couple home to see that good order was maintained.

It was the members of their family who were to help settle our country and be among the

first of the sturdy empire to push civilization of America into the west.

Shortly after their marriage the young couple started their endless journey into the west. The first place they settled was in Indiana, on the present site of Indianapolis long before that city was founded.

The couple had nine children. William was the first born, then came Luke, Frances, Thomas, Racheal, Stephen, Nancy, Rebecca, and Elizabeth. All of these children later settled in either Iowa or Nebraska. They all contributed largely to the settling of the west.

As they moved onward into the vast wilderness they spread their family and, before many years, the family of Thomas and Elizabeth Wiles reached from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River.

Later on Thomas and Elizabeth moved into Andrew County, Missouri, where the largest part of the family was raised. Here some of them married. Even later they emigrated into the state of Iowa. Here with strenuous labor and hardships they made a home for themselves and their family on the land they had purchased from the Mormons. They were always interested in the life of their community and advancements of the agricultural and business interests in their locality wherever they chose to settle.

The touch of this estimable family in the Central West was when two brother, Luke and Stephen, entered the Nebraska Territory in the year 1854 with their wives and families. They, following the avocation of their forefathers, were among the very first to break the virgin prairie sod of Nebraska.

Luke and Stephen entered Nebraska when Plattsmouth was only a trading post on the river. However, since it was situated on the "Cut-Off" trail, it was a place of much activity as wagons went past. During one season when the pioneers were hurrying west in long wagon trains, nearly 2,000 wagons past the trading post.

He decided to settle near this trail and bought some land from the Indians near their Catholic part of the cemetery. Nearby were two famous western landmarks. The legend was that years before the white men came west there lived a peaceful tribe on that land. Somehow a plague of sickness went over all of the Indians killing many. Two who died were a beloved chief and his beautiful young wife. They were buried on the hill and as a fitting tribute to them, the Indians (Pawnees) planted a tree over each grave. When these trees became full grown they were used as guides by the settlers who could see them far on the Iowa prairie. If one stayed in line with these trees they wouldn't have any trouble crossing the Missouri River.

He bought the land with gold. The Indians, not knowing what it was or what it was used for, took it anyway and moved off of the land.

Luke chopped the trees out of a nearby forest and split rails to build a fence around their acres of prairie. Later on he hired the Indians to build a larger fence.

Years later on of his children were playing in the forest and a mummified Indian fell out of the trees. He was wrapped in a big blanket. This was new to the children because they had never heard of anyone ever being buried on top of the ground or in a tree. When the blanket fell out the children, curious, ran up and opened it up and when they saw an Indian they screamed and ran into the house to get their father. He dug a grave for it and from then on the children were afraid of that tree which had been given the name of "skeleton tree."

One winter Luke and a neighbor killed fifty-six deer near their cabins. These were skinned and the hind-quarters buried in snow banks. In the spring Luke took them to St. Joseph, Mo., where he traded them for supplies to sell at his store to the pioneers moving westward.

He owned and operated a store-stable-hotel for the passengers of the stage coach and the U. S. Pony Express. The men kept their horses in the stable and changed off when they came back east, always having a fresh team.

Luke, like his parents, was the type of pioneer who came to build homes, establish churches and schools. He was always helping those who needed help. Often men, both good and

bad, would come to him for advice. Once in a while some bad men came into the territory. Some came to Plattsmouth and a vigilance committee was going to take all bad men in a boat and go down river. When the bad men found this out they came to Luke and begged him to intercede for them promising to reform and leave the country. Out of sympathy for the women of the families who seemed to be respectable, he went on the boat and talked with the men on the committee but they would not agree to release the lawless men. He left the boat which went down river. When it returned the men that had gone down on it, were not in evidence.

Isaac Wiles, like his large family before him, had the pioneer spirit. He was out for adventure, excitement, and activity. In 1849, the wagons lined the trail near his home for sometimes 50 miles. He, seeing this, got in the notion of going west, too. He, however, decided to go a different and seemingly better way which would take you faster. He would go by water. One morning Isaac, called the sojourner by his family, said goodbye to his family and started out for Louisiana. Here he took a ship on his way to California via Cape Horn. The trip took longer than he expected, even longer than if he would have gone by wagon. After he arrived in the gold fields he never found a nugget and went broke besides. He left and came back home to Iowa, four years after he had started. Later he moved into Nebraska with his brother.

In October, 1862, he joined the Second Nebraska Cavalry, having assisted in raising Company H of that regiment. He was appointed first Lieutenant of that company in November of that year. He served under that capacity for some 14 months. Shortly afterwards, in recruiting men for the First Nebraska Militia, he was Commissioned Captain of Co. B in which position he served for several more months. He helped to protect the settlers from the raiding Indians who were at this time causing much trouble in the west. He witnessed many of the famous battles between the Indian and white man.

This was all during the Civil War and following the war he returned to Nebraska.

He then ran for the Nebraska Legislature and was elected to one term. During his term in office he suggested that the State Motto be "Equality Before the Law." This motto is still used today. He also was instrumental in drawing the state seal which is also still used.

Stephen, the other brother who settled in Nebraska, was the first quiet one. He was a hunter and had many greyhounds. Their first child born in Nebraska would have been the first white child born in

the county had not Mrs. Wiles fearing the wilderness gone across the river to Coonsville for the event.

Twelve years after Luke Wiles and his family came to Nebraska they left, tired of the hardships to be met there. They went back into Iowa and left their 13-year-old son to live on the homestead and farm the ground.

Luke gave the land and helped to build the first school house in Mills County, Iowa. He was a Quaker and had a Quaker preacher come out from Indiana to start a Quaker Church. This man advised him that there weren't enough Quakers to start a church. He went into another church but at heart he was always a Quaker and love to use "thee" pronounced "thee" and "thou", when he talked.

There were other brothers and sisters who settled in Iowa and Nebraska. One sister named Rebecca settled near Murdock. Her first husband, William Gentry, had enlisted in the Civil War and never returned. She then married again. Her second husband's name was Albert Hutter.

One day Rebecca came raling across the prairie in a spring wagon. They knew that something must be wrong. Yes, something was wrong, a terrible thing had happened last night.

The day before Albert had taken some cattle to Omaha where he sold them. Instead of leaving the money at the bank he brought it home with him and his hired men, Benwell and Hall, knew it.

That night they heard a knock on the door. It was the two men. They said they wanted the money and Albert told them they couldn't have it. They broke in and shot Albert and knocked Rebecca down as she tried to defend him. She was hurt but not bad. The two men took the money, fled into the night, and were gone.

During the lifetime of this generation of the Wiles Family they watched the land develop into the most fertile in the nation. They witnessed two of the mighty conflicts which were waged and won, the railroad and the telegraph. The wireless, the airship, and the submarine were developed and brought into the service of mankind. They also witnessed a mighty war which made the lives of their generation secure, they witnessed the greatest strides of the human race which we now read in history books. The hardships of this era seem so fantastic to us, but were so real to them because they lived them and knew what they were like.

This family through the years has grown with the country it has always loved and which it has helped settle. Representative of this family with the perseverance of the spirit of their forefathers have helped build

# Main Street

By Vern Waterman

## Same Old Stand

Stander Implement is finally back into the north half of the building. Fire last spring destroyed the roof and the new roof is now on and the interior painted. The office has been moved back to the old location and the parts bins are in their once familiar spot. Stub Tritsch and Ed Garnsey were busy cleaning the tile floor and replacing damaged tiles. A new concrete ramp has been poured out back, and the former shop building lengthened about 20 feet. This will provide a larger area for tractor repair and service. The foreman of the concrete crew was Hugh Stander, Sr., and his eger assistants were George Stander, Charles Haecke and Charles Newburn.

## The Fine Arts

Terpsichorean enthusiasts were enthused this week by the announcement in a series of ads in the Journal that dancing classes would be held in Plattsmouth. Miss Cherie's studio will begin functioning and, in today's Journal, Janice Wiles is announcing the registration for classes in dancing. This should result in another nice series of recitals next spring like those we had this past year.

## Re-Opening

August Gall announces the re-opening of his duck pin bowling alley in an ad in today's issue. August has been operating the alley for a number of years in Plattsmouth. If you want to bowl in a league in duck pins see August Gall.

## A Diller of a Dollar Day

Local merchants are recovering from the onslaught of the buying public as the back-to-school shoppers swept the shelves of the many excellent

and settle the west after they helped to extend it.

The generations of this family today can look over these things their pioneer forefathers have done, with pride.

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bargains. All business men report that there were a number of new customers in town. Many from Iowa took advantage of the Ad Clubs free bridge and came over to Plattsmouth to buy school clothes for their family.

## Go North Young Man?

Clair Shellenbargers and the Ron Furses left this A. M. for a fishing trip to Canada. Sounds like a good idea even if there are no fish. It could get hot around here again. Butch Furse is in Colorado on a vacation trip.

## Daylight Savings?

The courthouse clock was several hours slow last week. The power was off in that area and the electric mechanism was stopped. When power was restored the clock remained slow. The explanation for the clocks tardiness was found in the fact that John Beckman, custodian, was on vacation. How many of us realize just how many stair steps John has to climb each

day just to put up the flag? It is quite a ways, and John does it twice each day, just to keep the flag flying at the top of the courthouse.

## The Passing Scene

The new grey front and blue ceiling that has been put on the Masonic building, soon to be occupied by Grove Jewelry. The ruler at Charles Valley's advertising a necessity of by-gone days—Keys Buggies! Officers Schneider and Cooper giving a push to the fellow in the Mercury with the broken bendix spring, at 2 a. m. and by hand too! Earl Hunter, the Journal steryper, hitting the vacation trail.

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# A Message For Eighth Grade Graduates and High School Students

At the beginning of this century, an eighth grade education was the accepted criterion of an educated person. A high school education was exceptional, and a college degree was a luxury not readily attained by the average person.

Now, at the middle of the century, times have changed. The more technical aspects of the jobs related to our complex industrial systems have reduced the demand for common labor to the point where it is a small field and vastly overcrowded.

Education like other businesses has progressed rapidly. Today a high school education is commonplace, a college degree in a specialized field is becoming a necessity.

All students who have not completed their high school work, and especially those who just graduated from the eighth grade are urged to complete their high school work for the sake of their own future. Your future earnings and welfare is closely related to the extent of the education you obtain for yourself.

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- ★ Industrial Arts
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- ★ Government
- ★ Foreign Languages
- ★ Geometry
- ★ Algebra
- ★ Bookkeeping
- ★ Typing
- ★ Shorthand
- ★ English

All Eighth Grade Graduates Are Invited to Attend

## Freshman Day Friday, August 19th

Starts 9:00 A. M.

Registration for 10th, 11th and 12th Grades, Monday, August 22, 9:00 A. M.

### PLATTSMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES SUCCEED!

For further information contact either: T. I. Friest, Supt., or C. A. Weddel

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