

Gray's Doniphan Co. History

P. L. Gray
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p. 85

CHAPTER IX.

NUTSHELL HISTORY.

Six car loads of hemp were recently shipped from Troy, raised principally by Norwegian farmers on the high prairie east of town. The price paid was \$60 ton. -- White Cloud Chief, June, 1872.

At the ^{not this house} house of Benj. Harding, near here Wathena now stands was held the first county election, November 24, 1854. Election of delegates to Congress.

There are still living in the County a few men who remember Jim Lane's big, bony forefinger, his bear skin overcoat, and his calf skin vest. The old folks speaking of Lane always close their remarks with the significant saying: "He was a queer Jim."

In the early sixties the county assessor found thirty or forty slaves to list as personal property. A slave was worth considerable money. A man named Davis who lived near Doniphan, traded forty acres of land for a good, healthy negro whom he took with him to Missouri. About the same time a negro slave was sold at auction in Iowa Point.

The originator of Decoration day, it is

claimed was James Redpath, who was at one time a resident of this County. While here he was editor of the Crusader of Freedom at Doniphan. Some years ago he was killed by a street car in an eastern city. Redpath was the author of one or two books on Kansas, and also of a life of John Brown.

The first meeting of the newly elected County commissioners was held at Whitehead, in October, 1855.

An early pony express rider whose route lay through this County was John Fry. He rode from St. Joseph to Seneca.

The Doniphan County Agricultural, Horticultural, and Mechanical Association completed its organization as an institution of public interest, in the month of January, 1868; since which time it has been growing in public favor very rapidly, and has given an impetus to all branches of agriculture in the County. This association has received so much encouragement, and has been so active in its effect upon the products of the county, that it is deemed advisable to hold a county fair this coming fall; and arrange-

A few 1854 settlers in and around Wathena: Benj. Harding, Osborne Hulan, Alfred Larzelere, Milton Bryan, Henderson Smallwood, John W. Smith, Samuel Montgomery, John Fee, J. J. Keaton, T. W. Watterson, Cary B. Whitehead, Anderson Cox, Joseph Siceluff, Tapley Ralph. We think all of these have passed away.

Dr. Smith came about 1855 with his little black grip, and a year later came Dr. Crossfield to assist him in the battle with ague, which was then the most persistent of the white man's ills.

About 1857, Sidney Theriet, a disciple of Blackstone, opened an office in the rising city.

The first school house, a frame building, was built about 1857.

The first Baptist church was organized in 1858, by Rev. Wm. Price and Rev. Alward. In 1871, their first church, costing about \$5,000, was erected.

The first Methodist church was organized in the same year by Rev. T. K. Munhall. Rev. D. H. May was appointed pastor. One of the early pastors of this church was Rev. O. B. Gardner, who "pulled down the rebel flag".

Rev. Ephriam Alward, a Baptist, taught the first Sunday school in 1858. Meetings were held in the school house.

In 1860, the St. Joseph & Denver railroad was laid to this point, and a few trains were run to and from Elwood. A big flouring mill was built the same year, at a cost of \$10,000.

The Wathena water mill was built on Peter's creek by S. Cox, in 1862. This mill was burned in March, 1881.

In 1864, Ferguson & Co. erected another grist mill.

The first postoffice money order issued from the Wathena postoffice in October, 1866, was issued by Aug. Miller, P. M., to W. P. Craig.

The town has had seven newspapers. The Reporter, established in 1867, by E. H. Snow and G. W. Larzelere; The Advance, established 1878, by E. A. Davis; The Mirror, started after the demise of the Advance, by G. W. Larzelere; The Gazette, established in July, 1889, by C. C. Bartruff; The Star, established in 1899, by Pool Grinstead; The Republican, started in 1900, by Pool Grinstead; The Times, established in 1901, by Pool Grinstead. Mr. Grinstead seems to have the backbone of the traditional editor that cannot be downed.

The German Methodist Episcopal church society was organized in October, 1867, by Rev. H. M. Meniger. In 1878, they purchased the church building of the Campbellites for \$1,100. In 1872, a parsonage, costing \$1,500, was erected.

In 1868, the town had 1,400 inhabitants. Prior to this time five additions had been made to the original townsite, as follows: North Wathena, Constantinople, Wilson's addition, Seaman's addition, and Smallwood's addition.

Wathena Lodge, No. 65, A. F. & A. M., was organized January 27, 1868. The first officers were: S. Hatch, W. M.;

Illustrated Nonjehan County 1916 - April 6
supp. to the Weekly Kansas Chief, Troy
p. 226

**Line of Railroad Running Through
Town Boundary—Main
Towns, Elwood and Wathena.**

Washington
have been a fine
but early in its exist-
ed to contribute suffi-
make up a large part
of Marion Townships.
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of Doniphan County
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and it was curtailed
in order to help form
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Rev. B. F. Bowman,
Holland, Henry Wil-
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s organized Sept. On the 21st day of June, 1850, a
American asked the

the United States; having been
elected in 1789.

It is one of the five original town-
ships, into which the county was di-
vided, at the first session of the
county commissioners, and its bound-
aries at the time were fixed as fol-
lows:

"Bounded on the north by Burr Oak
Township; on the east by the Mis-
souri River; on the south by the sec-
ond line, dividing townships 3 and 4,
and on the west by the second range
line running north and south through
Atchison." Albert Head and F. Mahan
were appointed justices of the peace,
and H. J. Johnson constable. These
were the first officers of the town-
ship.

The first election in this township
was held on the first Monday in Octo-
ber, 1855, "at the house of M. F. Moss,
near Milton Bryant's." On the 16th
day of September, 1856, a change was
made in the township, and its bound-
ary was fixed as follows: Commenc-
ing at the northeast corner of Section
12, Town 2, Range 21, thence south on
town line between 21 and 22 to the

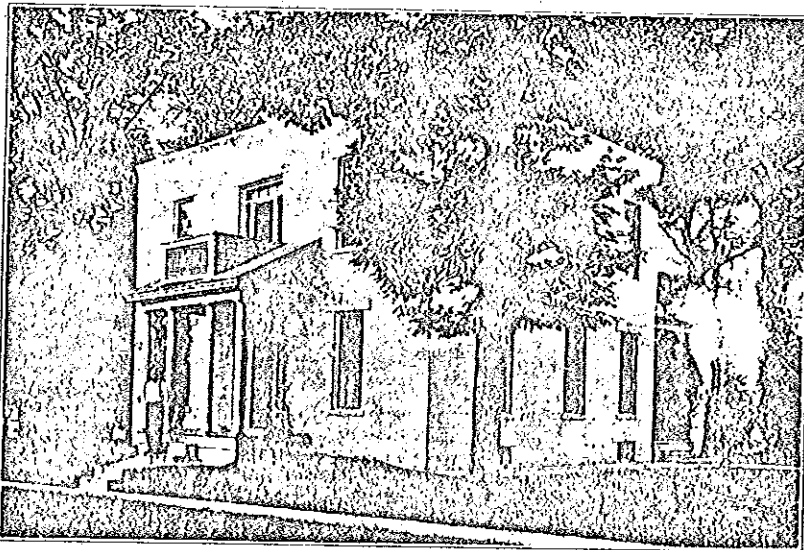
and bluff, land after leaving the "first
bottom." The Missouri River bot-
toms, however, are very productive.

The township is watered principally
by Peter's Creek and its tributaries.
Peter's Creek enters the township
from the west, on Section 24, and
flows east by south for about three
miles, when it makes an abrupt turn
to the south, and flowing through Wa-
thena, assumes a southwesterly direc-
tion, and empties into the Missouri
River at the southwest corner of the
township.

The first actual settler that located
in the township was James R. White-
head, who, in January, 1852, settled on
the bank of the Missouri River, near
Bellemont. By permission from W.
P. Richardson, then agent for the
Kickapoo Indians, he established a
trading post.

"In the spring of 1851 Wathena, a
Kickapoo Indian, built a bark wigwam
near the bank of Peter's Creek, a few
rods from the present site of the old
Snively & Hedge's mill at Wathena,
and lived in it until the spring of
1855."

"In April, 1852, Benjamin Harding
settled near what is now Wathena,
and established a trading post. He



The above house was built by Benjamin Harding and is one of the first
which was built in Doniphan County in 1857. The Harding heirs still own
the property, which is located in the northwest part of Wathena. The resi-
dence is occupied by Charles Harding, who was born in Wathena, July 4, 1853
and by his sisters, Misses Mary and Emma.

southeast corner of Section 12, Town
4, Range 21; thence west six miles to
the southwest corner of Section 7, Town
4, Range 21; thence north two miles
thence west one and a half miles,
thence north to the Missouri River,
thence east with said river to place of
beginning.

On October 20, 1856, the county
board caused one-half mile to be taken
from the eastern part of Iowa and
Wolf River Townships, and attached
to Washington Township. On the 21st
day of October, 1856, the boundaries
of Washington Township were
changed and fixed as follows: "Com-
mencing at the southwest corner of
Burr Oak Township, as then estab-
lished; then south on range line be-
tween Ranges 21 and 22 to within one
mile of the town line between Towns
3 and 4; thence east to Peter's Creek;
thence down Peter's Creek to the Mis-
souri River; thence north with said
river to the south line of Burr Oak
Township; thence west to place of be-
ginning."

also built a cabin and broke twenty
acres of ground and planted corn."

In 1853 Henry Thompson, who kept
a ferry at St. Joseph, built a house on
the west side of the river and moved
his family into it.

"In January, 1854, Daniel Vander-
slice, then agent for the Kickapoos,
let a contract to Ebenezer Blackiston
and H. Smallwood to cut the timber
from the road between Wathena and
the St. Joe ferry, one hundred feet in
width. They, with L. Ralph and Rob-
ert McSparrows, remained and became
permanent settlers.

"In the spring of 1854 many persons
came from Missouri and made claims
by laying four poles in the form of a
square and inscribing their names."

About the first marriage in the
township was that of Samuel Piles and
a Miss Hazelwood, in the spring of
1856. The ceremony was performed
at Bellemont, by J. T. Braidy, justice
of the peace.

It is said that the first white child
born in Washington Township was a
daughter of J. R. Whitehead, in the

ena, was organized in the
1858, by Benjamin Harding
under the administration of
Bayless, first county superintendent.
School sessions were held in a
building, 20 by 30, erected
and used up to the time of the
legal organization (1858).
description school.

Washington Township, among
things, is noted for its adan-
to raising fruit of all kinds, pa-
ticularly grapes. One of the ear-
liers in fruit culture was C. B.
Poirier, who located near Wathena
1854, and immediately comm-
raising fruit.

A. B. Hunter

Among the many natives of
who have gone forth into the
new but success, none have made
better progress than A. B. H.
now advertising manager for The
and Breeze, in southern Kansas.
Oklahoma, one of the Capper pu-
blications. Mr. Hunter was born in
Wathena, and when he was a small
his parents moved to Jackson, Kan-
sas, settling near Holton.
Hunter received his early educat-
the public schools and later at
bell University. Afterward he
school in Holton, and in Montana.
In 1902 he became interested in
paper work and went to Kansas
Mo., where he became connected
The Journal. Two years later, or
4, he left for Bonesteel, South D-
and after a brief experience went
to Kansas City again for a peri-
more than two years. He then con-
with the Capper publications,
through his industry, fidelity and
esty, has reached his present suc-
ful position. Outside of the ge-
manager of the Capper publica-
Marcow Morrow, Mr. Hunter is
best man in the employ of the pr-
governor. The subject of this ske-
endowed with literary ability,
would make a creditable parag-
for any metropolitan newspaper.

A Memorable Trip

In July, 1855, a free state del-
convention was called to meet at
Springs, in September, for the pur-
of organizing the free state party
for other purposes, and a mass me-
held at the house of A. Larz
elected John Fee, C. W. Stewart, A.
Groom, Newton Carter, Ed. Brya-
Harding and Benjamin H. Broc-
delegates to represent Doniphan C-
ty. The next day (Sunday), the
gates started on horseback, with
dle-bags full of bread and bacon, to
Big Springs. Never having hear-
the place before, they had only a v-
idea of the location; but they fou-
on the third day, half way betw-
Lawrence and Topeka—presumabl-
result of a compromise—and t-
were several houses, such as v-
fashionable in those days. Among o-
celebrities there, were Jim Lane, J-
Smith, Judge Johnson, Judge W-
field, M. J. Parrott, and Gover-
Reeder; but the speech which attra-
the most attention was made by C-
ley W. Stewart.

After two days' session, making
tory, and arranging preliminaries
the Topeka constitutional convent-
the convention adjourned, and
started homeward. Knowing wh-
home was, better time was made.
the road, three men dying with the

Wathena, June
Aug 1 1957



UNDER THIS TREE in Wathena the white men found Chief Wathena's wigwam.



CAPT. BENJAMIN HARDING

CAPTAIN HARDING WAS INDIAN AGENT

Benjamin Harding, an authorized Indian Agent, opened a trading post upon his claim (North Wathena) in 1852. Others who were living within the present boundaries of Wathena by 1855 were Constant Poirier, Henderson Smallwood, Dr. Sena Gurney, Albert Head, J. S. Spaulding, and John Brazelton Sr. Peter Groh had established his claim which included the old Chautauqua Grounds. The first general store within the original town was opened by Thompson Kemper in 1856 and Milton Bryan was appointed postmaster. During the same year, Albert Head established a hotel and saloon.

The first general store, known as the "St. Joe Store" was operated by Thompson Kemper, who became Wathena's first postmaster on August 2, 1856. (He considered the post-office a nuisance and soon turned it over to Milton E. Bryan.) Albert Heath, Wathena's first lawyer, did

a thriving business, both as a lawyer and a Hotel Keeper. The first physicians were Dr. Smith and Dr. Crossfield. Florian Leber set up a blacksmith shop in 1854.

Alfred Larzelere, a stone mason and contractor, settled west of Wathena, February 23, 1855. He built the old Catholic, old Methodist, old Presbyterian (later the Town Hall), and the present Baptist Churches.

The first child born in Wathena was Charles H. Harding on July 4, 1853. The first hardware store was operated by H. D. Hunt, and the first furniture store by D. B. Jones. By 1879, Wathena had thirteen saloons.

WATHENA HAS LINK TO PONY EXPRESS

Wathena was a link to the famed Pony Express because one of its first riders was intimately connected to Wathena residents.

Johnny Fry, son of Joseph Fry of St. Joseph, often visited here with his uncle, Reason Fry, the Evans boys, Lank, Van, and Jack, and Charles, Oscar and Douglas Larze-

lere at Mount Airy.

Johnny Fry was the first Pony Express rider from St. Joseph.

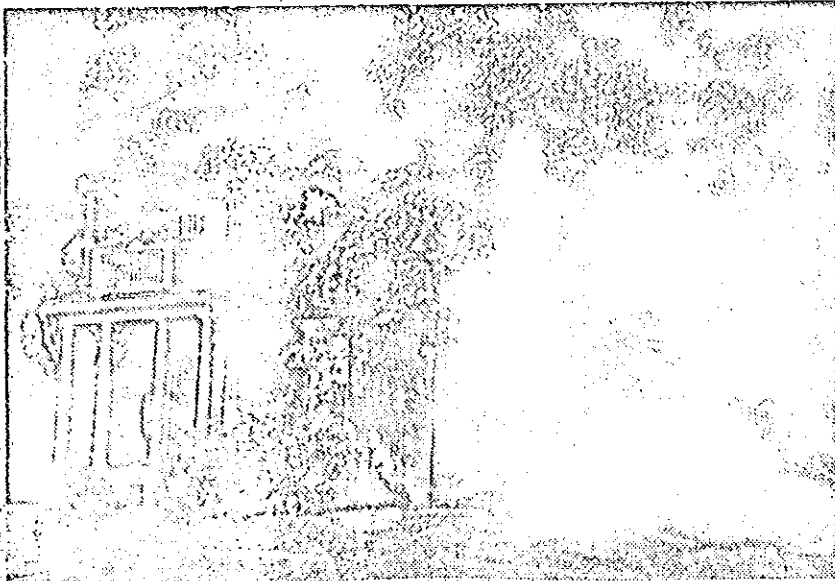
His friend, Charles Larzelere, once carried the mail. As he neared Seneca, Kan., he came upon the body of the east-bound rider, pierced with an Indian arrow. He picked up the mail, pulled out the arrow and rode to the nearest Pony Express station where he reported the tragedy.

However, he kept the bloodstained arrow and often held his nieces and nephews spellbound while he related how he came to possess it.

Johnny Fry went to war when the Civil War broke out, leaving his famous mare with his uncle, Reason Fry. Johnny was killed in a battle at El Dorado. But his mare gave birth to a foal and a number of colts were raised from her by Frederick Reuss (Rice) who bought the foal.

FIRST RAILROAD IN KANSAS

of Railroads
Doniphan County had the first railroad, "The Roseport (Elwood) and Palmetto (Palermo), in Kansas. On March 20, 1860, the first iron



THIS HOUSE was the home of Captain Benjamin Harding and his family in Wathena.

Weekly Kansas Chief

777 7d

Troy

Nov. 23, 1893

Wathena.

Wathena is located on what used to be the Kickapoo lands, and was once the site of a village of the tribe. The first settler of whom there is any record was that ubiquitous person, who seemed to have been the first settler of all the eastern part of the County, named Peter Cadue, one of those roving Frenchmen who were at an early period scattered over the country, beyond the bounds of civilization, trading or trapping, and who were easily satisfied. In order to get into the good graces of the Indians, they would marry squaws, and live like Indians. Such was Peter Cadue. He was married to a Kickapoo squaw, and was Indian interpreter. He located at Wathena at an early date. As we have remarked elsewhere in this issue, Peter's Creek, that runs through Wathena, was named for him. He left the locality about 1847, and removed to a reservation that was set apart to him, now known as Petersburg Bottom, between Palermo and Geary City. The next settler was Wah-ce-na, or Wathena, for whom the town was named. This was about 1852. Soon after, Benjamin Harding located there, probably as a trader. The town was laid off in 1856, by Milton E. Bryan. Harding's land was adjoining, and he afterwards laid off an addition, called North Wathena. Constant Poirier, on the west, laid off another addition, called Constantinople, or West Wathena; and H. S. Creal, on another side, laid off Creal's Addition. The Postoffice was originally known as Bryan's, and Milton E. Bryan was the postmaster. August Mouirguies, Sen., operated a store there before the town was laid out. Florian Leiber had a blacksmith shop there, in 1854. Albert Heed built the first hotel, and Sidney Tennant opened a law office. Both these last named afterwards located at Troy. Wathena did not make much headway until Elwood began to decline, with the beginning of the war when a number of the business men removed from Elwood to Wathena.

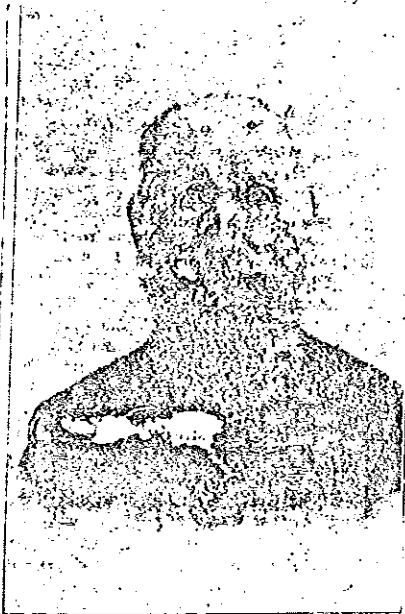
We have been furnished with a list of persons who settled at or near Wathena, in 1854. Benjamin Harding and Osborn Hulan are the only ones who are still living there. The following are all dead: Alfred Larzelere, Milton E. Bryan, Henderson Smallwood, John W. Smith, Samuel Montgomery, John Fee, J. J. Keaton, Thomas W. Waterson, Cary B. White-

1852
1856

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Robert S. Dinsmore was born December 4, 1853, at Washington, Iowa, and came to Highland, with his parents, August 26, 1870. After teaching school in this County and in Missouri for a few years, he graduated from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, at Keokuk, Iowa, and afterward attended lectures at Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia. He located in Troy, April 1, 1878, and has resided here ever since, in active practice of his profession. He was married November 21, 1883, to Miss Etha. Wilkinson, daughter of Judge Robert. Wilkinson.

Dr. Dinsmore has gained celebrity among the shooting fraternity, as an expert with the pistol, rifle, and shotgun, and numbers among his friends all the noted shots of the United States. He also stands high in the Masonic fraternity, being a member of Troy Lodge No. 55, A. F. & A. M.; Troy Chapter, No. 16, R. A. M.; Hiawatha Commandery, No. 13, Knights Templar; and Abdallah Shrine, of Leavenworth. He has been Coroner of Doniphan County for about fifteen years.



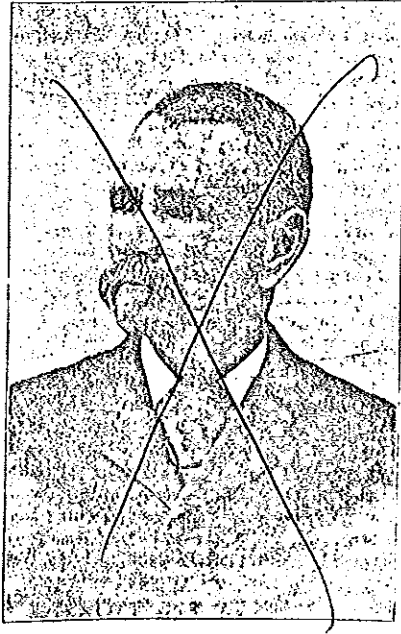
Benjamin Harding.

Mr. Harding is one of the very early

212 . 220.

pioneers of Doniphan County. He was born in Otsego County, New York, November 25, 1816. His early occupation was that of school teaching, which he followed in New York, Pennsylvania, Missouri, and Kansas. He came to Missouri in 1844, and to the new State of Kansas in 1846, engaging in the Indian trade at the Iowa Mission, near Highland. In 1849 he returned to St. Joseph, where he remained until April, 1852, when he took a claim adjoining the present town of Wathena, which he pre-empted in 1855, making him a continuous resident of the County for more than forty-one years. In the early days, Mr. Harding was one of the aggressive Free State men, and suffered his share of indictments and arrests. He took part in all the movements, meetings and conventions of the Free State men in the early days. He was elected to the Territorial Council in 1857, and from 1862 to 1866 held the office of Register of Deeds of this County. Since then he has lived in comparative retirement, and has not participated much in public affairs.

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\$2.00 Per Day.

SAMPLE ROOM,

The Most Convenient on the
Road.

A Memorable Trip.

In July, 1855, a Free State Delegate Convention was called to meet at Big Springs, in September, for the purpose of organizing the Free State Party, and for other purposes, and a mass meeting held at the house of A. Larzelere, elected John Fee, C. W. Stewart, Arnet Groom, Newton Carter, Ed. Bryan, B. Harding, and three others as delegates to represent Douglas County. The next day (Sunday), the delegates started on horseback, with saddle-bags full of bread and bacon, to find Big Springs. Never having heard of the place before, they had only a vague idea of the location; but they found it on the third day, half way between Lawrence and Topeka—presumably the result of a compromise—and there were several houses, such as were fashionable in those days. Among other celebrities there, were Jim Lane, Judge Smith, Judge Johnson, Judge Wakefield, M. J. Parrott, and Governor Reeder; but the speech which attracted the most attention was made by Charley W. Stewart.

After two days' session, making history, and arranging preliminaries for the Topeka Constitutional Convention, the Convention adjourned, and all started homeward. Knowing where home was, better time was made. On the road, three men dying with cholera were passed. On the second day, Carter's horse failed, when he dismounted, and drove him as best he could. The weather was extremely hot, and he became overheated. Fee became wearied, and fell back with Carter. All reached home that night, (Saturday). Before morning, Carter and Fee were taken with cholera, and at 2, p. m., Sunday, both were dead.

BENJAMIN HARDING.

Have You Tried It? — We Mean

B. F. Harding
102 04

K.C. Journal
Nov. 26, 1902

WOULD NOT DOWN

EXPERIENCES OF KANSAS' OLDEST
CONTINUOUS RESIDENT.

B. F. HARDING, OF WATHENA

ENDURED PERSECUTION WITH OTHERS
IN THE EARLY DAYS.

Has Lived in Kansas Continuously
Since 1852, and Has Just Celebrated
His 57th Birthday—
Paralysis Marks Declining
Days.

1903

TROY, KAS., Nov. 25.—(Special.) Benjamin F. Harding, of Wathena, the oldest continuous resident in Doniphan county or in the state, celebrated his 57th birthday today. He had enjoyed good health until two years ago, when he was stricken with paralysis. Since that time his speech has been affected, and he has required considerable care.

Mr. Harding was born in Olsego county, N. Y., November 25, 1846. He spent his childhood and grew to manhood in his native state. He went to Courtland county, N. Y., at 17, and lived there until he was 24. He got his education in the schools of New York, and was a teacher for three years.

In 1844 he went from New York to Missouri, and engaged in teaching in Charlton, Livingston county, until 1846. In 1846, being a strong free state man, he came to the then territory of Kansas, and was appointed secretary to Indian Agent Irwin.

He was allotted to service at the Iowa mission, northeast of the present town of Highland. Mr. Harding continued in the Indian service until 1849. From 1849 till 1852, he was a teacher in the public schools of the city of St. Joseph, Mo. In April, 1852, he moved back to Doniphan county, Kas., and pre-empted the homestead on which he has since lived.

In 1858 he built a large concrete house, the largest dwelling in Kansas at that time. He was identified with the living issues in the making of Kansas a free state from the inception of the movement. Mr. Harding has accumulated considerable wealth, and has lived a retired life for many years.

He was early recognized as one of the strong men and was a leader of those sturdy pioneers that labored so hard against such strong odds to keep slavery out of the state. His fact and recognized ability caused him to be chosen first as a captain of Company K, Ninth Kansas S. M., and in 1859 he was a member of the council of territorial legislature.

In 1856 the Lecompte government was at the zenith of its power and basked in the sunshine of national approval. Mr. Harding was summoned by the then sheriff, Cary B. Whitehead, to serve as a juror at the March term of court in Belmont. The sheriff knew Mr. Harding was a legislator. The legislature was in session at the time he was returned for service before Judge Le Compt.

Sheriff Whitehead, anticipating default on the part of Mr. Harding as a result of his necessary attendance on the legislature at Topeka, arranged to arrest him there. Mr. Harding with his colleagues proceeded to Topeka. The outlook was far from pleasant for the free-state men; the border ruffians from Missouri, who were determined to make Kansas a slave state, had a brutal majority and carried things with a high hand.

Mr. Harding was arrested and taken before Judge Le Compt by Sheriff Whitehead on a charge of contempt for his failure to report as juror. Mr. Harding's excuse of being absent on duty without intentional contempt was not allowed. He was imprisoned at Doniphan on the added charge of constructive treason and compelled to furnish bail on this totally unfounded charge.

In September of that year he was put on trial and fined \$10 and costs. Twice he was tried and each time fined at Leavenworth. But it was impossible to keep down the spirit of the founders of the great commonwealth of Kansas.

He has been register of deeds of this county for four years. Mr. Harding is spending his declining years on the old homestead. There, with his family grown up and prosperous, he husbands life's taper at the close, a type of the best citizenship.