

Bentley Family

Tour of Harrison Township – 2-24-2005

Entered Harrison Township on Highway 183 from Elm Creek through Miller. Aspen Dairy buildings on east side of highway right after entering the township.

Mostly grass land, some bales indicating a hay field. Little corn. Did not see any other tilled crop but corn. Most herds black angus and white faced angus. A Hereford here and there.

Richard Pierce farm on west side of highway 2½ miles from south border of township. More corn around his farm than we saw anywhere else. After another couple of miles Otter Creek course could be seen on east side of highway. (Didn't see any water though.) Some trees along here.

Turned east five miles up from south edge, between sections 4 and 9. Road not straight on the section line because of the Otter. Cut south to half mile line of section 10. Came to Red Wing school house on south side of the road. (see photos in Red Wing, Dist. 71 file) Paint wearing off, window panes gone, bell tower empty, rotting & missing shingles. Looks like it was a very nice building in its day.

Turned south at next intersection, between sections 10 and 11. Came to the Randy Bentley farmstead. A phone call to the county clerk's office earlier in the day had provided the information that he is on the township board but there had been no answer to a phone call. Now we found him and his brother Jerry working fence along the east side of the road just north of his place. We stopped to talk to them for a while and to their father, Les, who came along in a pickup later.

Conversation with Jerry, Randy & Les Bentley – 2-24-2005

The conversation covered a variety of topics as I asked them questions about the township, its history, what is there. This is some of the information I learned.

The land north of us appeared to be quite sandy. It is sandy along the South Loup River (which was less than a mile north of where we were. A finger of the sandhills follows river. The soil becomes more clay as one goes south.

Red Wing school closed in 1989. There was an auction and someone bought the building but he did not move it in the allotted 60 days so it reverted to the land owner who has done nothing with it. Les's father attended Red Wing in the old building which was east of the present site, by the river. Children now attend Amherst, Sumner in the S-E-M district, or Ansley depending where the family lives.

Milt's store was located on the highway on the Buffalo County side of the Buffalo/Custer county line. The store was originally built about a mile west along the route of the railroad that was supposed to be built from Pleasanton through Sartoria northwest to Ansley. The roadbed was prepared past Sartoria through Harrison Township on the north side of the Loup. When the railroad did not happen, the store was moved over to what is now Highway 183. When the highway was paved, the store was in the right-of-way so they had to move a third time. The store was run by Seraphine, who lived to be 100 and never did retire, and her daughter, Virginia.

Elk Creek empties into the Loup from the north, the Otter from the south. They did not know of names for any others.

Mrs. Kleckner:

Clarence – father

Morrison &

Ohio Rhode Island

Morrison

Aholiab father of Morrison

6 chi

2 daughters homesteaded/taught

Loup 1881.

1700 acres – Red Wing

BIOGRAPHICAL SOUVENIR OF BUFFALO COUNTY, p 271-3

MORRISON A. BENTLEY, one of the highly respected citizens of Buffalo county, was born in Brown county, Ohio, October 6, 1831. His parents were natives of Ohio, and were married November 16, 1830. They had two children, Morrison A. and Martin C. The senior Bentley was a merchant at Georgetown, Ohio, in an early day, and went to Philadelphia and New York city by stage, once a year, to purchase goods, there being no railroads in those days. These long journeys by stage were made at a great risk of life and property. The route was through the Alleghany mountains, and passengers were often held up by robbers. Mr. Bentley sometimes returned from these long, perilous trips with his clothes perforated with bullet holes, and it was his custom always to arrange his business affairs before starting, just as though he never expected to return home alive. In 1846, he engaged in the manufacture of iron (pig metal) in Gallia and Madison counties, Ohio. In a short time he gained, by honesty, perseverance and energy, a competency sufficient to enable him to retire from active business. For nearly forty years he has resided in Portsmouth, Ohio, enjoying the reward of his youthful labors, living in comfort and affluence, esteemed by all who know him.

Morrison A. Bentley, in the fall of 1849, entered Alleghany college, at Meadville, Pa., and was an industrious and deserving student, until failing health compelled him to relinquish the thought of graduating. He left college to accept the position of book-keeper for the firm of Bentley, Campbell & Co. Finding office work detrimental to his health he was given the position of general manager, which business required him much of his time to be in the open air. About this time, Mr. Bentley bought an

interest in the iron works in which he was employed (his father retiring from active business) and the name of the firm (Bentley, Campbell & Co.) remained unchanged.

In 1862, he, with two other gentlemen, bought another iron furnace in Hocking county, Ohio, under the name of M. A. Bentley & Co., which he financiered successfully until after the close of the war, when again failing health and the protracted and almost fatal illness of his wife caused him to sell out his interests in Ohio and engage in agricultural pursuits in Iowa.

Morrison A. Bentley was married February 14, 1856, to Elizabeth H. Davis, of Portsmouth, Ohio. She was born February 14, 1837, and educated at the seminary in Steubenville, Ohio. She graduated from that school in 1854, when she was seventeen. The parents, James W. and Amanda Baldwin Davis, were born in Pittsburgh, Pa. Her father was for many years largely interested in the steamboat and iron business, and was one of the pioneers of Portsmouth, Ohio, where he lived many years, but subsequently became a resident of Des Moines, Iowa, where he died December 12, 1869. He was a man who commanded the respect of all who knew him.

Six children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Bentley, all of whom are now living. Mr. Bentley has given his children every opportunity within his power to obtain a good education. His two eldest daughters are graduates from the high school and Callanan college, of Des Moines, Iowa. These young ladies came to Nebraska soon after graduating, and took advantage of Uncle Sam's offer to pre-empt homestead and timber claim land, teaching *country schools* "while holding down their claims." They have been successful both as teachers and land claimers, having grit enough to prove up both on pre-emption and homestead. Their brother, too, took claims and is now a prosperous farmer. It required a great deal of "grit, grace and gumption" for these three young people to hold on to their claims, as there were many hardships and discouragements in the way; but they held on and came off victors in the strife, and are *peaceable, honest* possessors of the land.

In the beginning of the late war, Mr. Bentley, then in his young manhood, offered his services to his country, but was rejected on account of physical disability. He, however, showed his great interest in the cause by hiring a man to go in his stead. Both he and his wife took an active part in promoting the welfare of "the soldier boys." He assisted the government in organizing troops in southern Ohio, and one company went out from his own works, commanded by his foreman. Regardless of his own interests, he did all in his power to encourage volunteers. He was one of many who suffered loss by Morgan's raid in that state. Mr. Bentley is a quiet, unassuming man, and during his residence in this county has won the respect of all who know him. Although no politician, he is a firm believer in the principles of the republican party. In 1881 Mr. Bentley moved to Beaver city, Nebr., but in a few months located on the banks of the Loup river, where the family possess about seventeen hundred acres of land. He

was instrumental in organizing the first school district in the township, and aided in building the first schoolhouse. The country was then very sparsely settled, and the family realize very many changes since their settlement on the Loup.

Census Records

1880 – Warren County, Linn Township, Iowa

Bentley, Morrison, 48

Elizabeth, 42, wife

Carrie, 23, daughter

Minnie, 21, daughter

Davis, 17, son

Alla, 14, daughter

Clarence, 12, son

Tina, 4, daughter

1900 – Harrison Township

Bentley – Clarence, head 32, married 9 yrs b Iowa

Viola, wife 32, widow, 4 chil. 4 liv b Iowa

Corwin, son, 8, b Oregon

Hadael, son, 5, b Oregon

Shirley, son, 3, b Oregon

Dwight, son, 1, b NE

1910 – Harrison Township

Bentley – Viola, head 42, widow, 5 chil. 5 liv b Iowa

Corwin, son, 18, b Oregon

Hadael, son, 15, b Oregon

Shirley, son, 13, b Oregon

Dwight, son, 11, b NE

Vera, dau., 9, b NE

1930 – Harrison Township

Bentley, Hadsel, 34

Inez, 33, wife

Clarence, 11

Leslie, 8

Keith, 4

Arlys, 1 10/12

Bentley, Dwight, 31

Viola, mother, 62, mother, widow

Vera, 29, sister

Miller Heritage Book – Bentley article – or Arlys Kleckner

Morrison Bentley, born 1831 in Ohio

Elizabeth Davis, born 1837 in Ohio

Married in 1856

Came to Beaver City, NE for a few months in 1881 –

Then moved to Buffalo County on the Loup River.

Homesteaded

Helped organize the first school district and build the schoolhouse

Six children:

Davis

Clarence – married Viola, moved to Oregon in 1891
returned from Oregon to farm north of Miller
died 1-31-1905

Grandmother Warren came to live with the family

Carrie – Homesteaded & taught school

Minnie – Homesteaded & taught school

Allbie (Alla)

Ferne

Morrison

Clarence

Hadsel married Inez Day

Clarence married Velma Roberts

Ron

Larry

Leslie married Ruby Roberts

Keith married Alta

David

Kathy

Janna married Dick Pierce

Arlys married Klechner