

EWING FAMILY NEWS

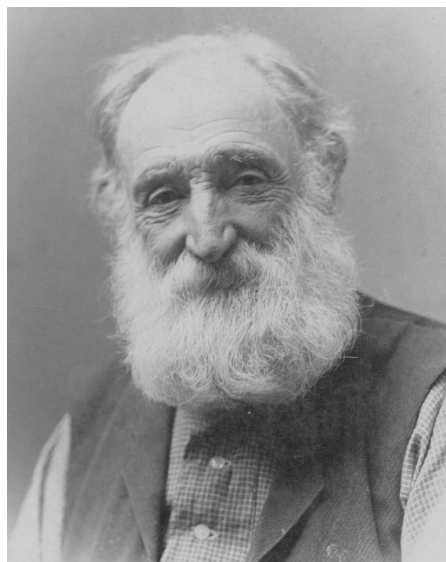
Descendants of William Alexander Ewing

We knew her as "Grandma Coxley"

A Profile of Nancy Ann (Welch) Coxley

Memories of "Grandma Coxley" are few and brief for me. Mostly I remember short visits at the tiny house in Frankfort which were more memorable for the park across the street that beckoned us as kids, where we would play while the grown-ups visited in the house. Cousins who lived in Marshall County knew her much better, having had the opportunity to see her more often. She passed away when I was only eight, so my image of her comes from a few brief encounters, old photos and stories that I've heard plus what can be found in public records. The following is what I've been able to find so far.

Nancy Ann Welch was the fifth child in a family of nine children born to Mordecai and Almira (Knapp) Welch in north-central Ohio (Huron County). The family moved a lot, with the federal cen-



Mordecai Welch

sus each ten years finding them living in a different township but always in Huron County. Mordecai is listed as a farmer in each of the census forms.

Mordecai Welch served for a short time in the Civil War, enlisting in May of 1864 and being



Almira (Knapp) Welch

discharged in September of the same year. In later life he applied for a disability pension and stated in the application that he was not able to do manual labor due to injuries to his shoulders, ribs and hips, having been run over by a load of stones. That probably explains his very short military enlistment.

Mordecai was born March 4, 1827 in New York, one of the younger children of Azel and Sally Welch (Sally's maiden name is not known). There were nine children in Azel and Sally's family, with Mordecai being number

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The newsletter is going electronic.

The mailing list has become more obsolete with each mailing as people move and don't update their address. The next issue will be delivered in PDF format via email. Be sure to send me a current email address if you want to receive the newsletter.

Printed copies may be requested by contacting me.

Butch Ewing 900 N. Lakeview, Derby, KS 67037

(316) 788-1605

butchewing@yahoo.com

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eight. It's not known when the Welch family moved from New York to Ohio, but was certainly prior to Azel's death in 1843. He is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery at Norwalk, Ohio.

Mordecai evidently grew up in Ohio, since one of his older brothers died there in 1838 (Mordecai would have been 11 at that time). Some of his siblings were married in Huron County, Ohio and many of them are buried there.

In 1851, Mordecai Welch married Almira Knapp, daughter of Benjamin R. and Almyra (Smith) Knapp. That's all that is known about Almira's family at this time.

Mordecai and Almira had a large family but not a lot is known about them. The following information comes from research done in 1983 by Mabel Fetterman and from a descendant of Mary Jane Welch who I found a few years ago online.

The children of Mordecai and Almira Welch were:

Mary Jane — born 1852. Married first to Samuel McCan in 1872, and second to James Hoyt in 1878. Died 1935 in Ohio.

Franklin B. — born 1854. Married first to Elizabeth Fueson in 1879 and second to Jeanette Hunt in 1898.

Inez — born 1857. In her research, Mabel Fetterman speculated that Inez may have died as a child since she was listed in the 1860 census but not after that.

Alfretta — born 1859, she married A.B. Skadden in 1879 and they moved to Kansas. Alfretta died in Frankfort, Kansas in 1913.

Nancy Ann — born 1864, married Gustavus Coxley in 1880 and moved to Kansas in 1888.

A set of twins:

Emily — born 1870. She never



Nancy Ann Welch — (at left) as a child, photo from an old tintype. (at right) as she appeared in 1880 when she married Gus Coxley.

married and still lived with her parents in the 1900 census. She died in 1921, just 5 months after her mother died.

Elnora — born 1870, married John DeLong in 1887. Nothing else is known about her.

Jessie — born 1872. First married James Kennedy in 1895 and secondly married Harry Burger.

William T. — born 1874. Married Grace Signs in 1896. They moved to New York after 1900, where he died in 1924.

All the children were born in Huron County, Ohio, most of them were married there and some are buried there. So the family stayed fairly close to its roots, at least until the 1880's. By that time the westward expansion of the United States was effecting most families, even those that were solidly rooted.

In 1879 Alfretta Welch married

Absolem Benjamin Skadden. A few years later they moved west with some of his family, settling in Marshall County, Kansas, west of Frankfort in Wells Township.

Land records place them in Kansas in the latter part of 1882.

Evidently, A.B. (Ben) and Alfretta (Ett) Skadden were successful in their new Kansas home, as they were able to convince Ett's younger sister and her family to make the move a few years later.

Ett's younger sister, Nancy Ann, married a neighbor boy, Gus-

tavus Coxley, a few months before her 16th birthday in 1880. Nancy and Gus quickly established their family and grew it to include a girl and two boys by 1885. When Ett and Ben urged them to move to Kansas, things had evidently



Alfretta ("Ett") Welch

changed enough in Ohio to make the invitation appealing enough to accept.

The Coxleys made the move to Kansas in 1888 and settled in Marshall County west of Frankfort near the Skaddens. In 1889 another boy was born into Nancy and Gus Coxley's family. And in 1892 they bought a quarter-section farm in the southwest corner of Wells Township which, coincidentally, was adjacent to the homestead of William Alexander Ewing. The next few years would be spent in raising a family and establishing a successful farm.

It's not known what the motivation was, but as the century turned, the Coxleys were looking for new ground. In the fall of 1900 they purchased 400 acres in Clearfork Township near the Reserville school, but possession of the new farm could not be given until the following spring.

The Coxleys' daughter, Salome, was nearing 20 years of age and had become an item of great interest to one of the neighbor's boys. Family legend has always indicated that Nancy Coxley had very little respect for Ira Ewing, and if putting distance between him and her daughter was the motivation to move, she waited too long to start the process. Salome Coxley married Ira Ewing on January 10, 1901, just three months before the Coxleys moved to Reserville.

A year after moving to Clearfork Township, Gus Coxley bought an additional 80 acre farm that adjoined their original purchase on the south. A generation later, the grandkids would usually refer to the original 400-acre purchase as "Grandma's farm" and the second purchase as "Granddad's 80". That tells us something of the relationship that existed.

Although short in stature, Nancy Coxley had a fiery demeanor and was not opposed to making a stand on issues, being quick to state her position. Stories abound regarding very heated discussions at the dinner table with fists being shaken and verbal barbs being thrown between the teenaged boys and their mother, while Gus sat quietly.

The family changes

Nancy's father died in Ohio in 1903 and evidently her mother came to Kansas for a while, as the 1905 census for Clearfork Township shows Almira Welch living with the Coxleys. It's not known how long she stayed with them.

Alexander Coxley, youngest son of Nancy and Gus, died suddenly of complications from a ruptured appendix in 1905 and Nancy's sister, Ett Skadden died in 1913. Then, just a year later in 1914, Ez-

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The Welch family — *(Photo taken between 1896 and 1903. Identities are not on the photo, but information with other photos, combined with the data that we have gives us some insight).*

Seated: Mordecai and Almira. **Standing (left to right):** Alfretta (Ett); next is the wife of Franklin, but we don't know if it's his first or second wife; Franklin; Mary Jane; Jessie; Nancy Ann; William; Emily; and last is William's wife, Grace.

It is believed that Elnora, Emily's twin, is not in this photo. She married in 1887 and it is not known if she was still alive when this photo was taken.

*Wishing you
happiness and
blessings this
Christmas and
throughout the
New Year.*

Butch Ewing
900 N. Lakeview
Derby, KS 67037



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ra, the Coxleys' second son, also died with a ruptured appendix. That left the Coxleys with only two living children, Salome and oldest son, Dean.

In the meanwhile, Nancy's ongoing dispute with her son-in-law had escalated in 1908, a few months after the birth of Ira and Salome's first daughter, Nellie. Distraught over a failed corn crop, Ira had become depressed, causing an incident in which he had threatened himself harm. Later, Nancy took Ira's 6-year-old son to Marysville to testify in court, having Ira judged as "insane" and committing him to treatment in the State Hospital. Although Ira's incarceration would last only about a year, it would not be the last of his conflict.

1917 would see the marriage of Dean Coxley to Ila Mills and the retirement of Gus and Nancy Coxley from the farm. While the elder Coxleys moved to Frankfort, Nancy maintained some control of the farm. Dean and Ila Coxley lived on "Grandma's

farm" plus bought an adjoining 120-acre farm in 1919. Land records show that Nancy negotiated a number of oil-company leases on the original farm over the years.

By 1920, Ira and Salome were living on Dean Coxley's 120-acre farm with their family which included eight children from ages 1 to 18. Ira's behavior must have still been a source of concern for



Nancy Coxley with great-great granddaughter, Linda Siemens, about 1953.

Nancy, as she had him back in court in February, 1922, and once again committed to the State Hospital in Topeka.

A mere four months later, Salome would die from complications of her tenth pregnancy and Nancy would be named executor of her estate. The eight children of Ira and Salome would continue to live on Dean Coxley's farm, the older ones caring for the younger, for about another year. Then, to settle the estate, the children were named as wards of the court, with all but the two oldest being doled out to anyone who would take them. The youngest, Mary, would stay with Gus and Nancy.

Nancy Coxley died in Frankfort on December 7, 1953, at age 89. She had outlived everyone in her family except her younger sister, Jessie. She had also outlived all four of her children and Gus, who died in 1946. She was survived by ten grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren.