

EWING FAMILY NEWS

Descendants of William Alexander Ewing

Preserving history....

Old postcards recall demolished towns

As the calendar turned from the nineteenth century to the twentieth, advances in the design of cameras and the way they operated created a shift in the way people communicated. New films and smaller, lighter cameras made it possible for people other than professional photographers to produce images of places, things and folks in their lives. And putting those images, along with a short message, on a card that could be mailed easily and inexpensively created a boom in the postcard business. More than a fad, the use of postcards increased world-wide in the first few years of the century, so that by 1913 the number of cards

mailed in the United States alone neared a billion, with more in Europe. The postcard had become the equivalent of today's email or text-message.

Many of them were photo postcards.... some mass-produced by printing processes and some were produced by individuals in very small quantities. The photos were as varied as the people taking them and many of the cards produced a hundred years ago are still in existence today -- snapshots of people, places and things that have been long gone. In some cases, postcards are the only images that still exist of parts of our history. This is especially true of many of the smaller

towns across the country. Former thriving communities that served as centers for commerce and social gatherings have been partially or totally removed for a variety of reasons.

In southern Marshall County, Kansas, where our ancestors settled, a number of towns grew along railroads as the routes were established. They thrived for many decades until the last half of the 1900's. Then, as families migrated away from the farms and small towns into larger cities and industrial areas, rural centers began to shrink and some disappeared completely... in the name of progress.

Cities from Manhattan to Kansas City had always been plagued by frequent flood waters draining down the Big Blue and Kansas rivers. After record high-water marks were set in 1951, it was decided to solve the problem by building a dam above Manhattan on the Big Blue and creating a reservoir to retain flood waters. Great for the cities downstream, but not so great for the towns and communities along the Big Blue and Black Vermillion valleys where flood water would pool.

EWING FAMILY REUNION

Sunday, September 26, 2010

Cigna Center • 4th and Maple • Frankfort, Kansas
(2 blocks north and 1 block east of the Cenex station)

The doors open about 11:00 a.m. - "Pot luck" lunch about noon

Bring the family and a little food and enjoy the afternoon visiting

Questions? call:
Kay Haskin (785) 292-4534
or Butch Ewing (315) 788-1605

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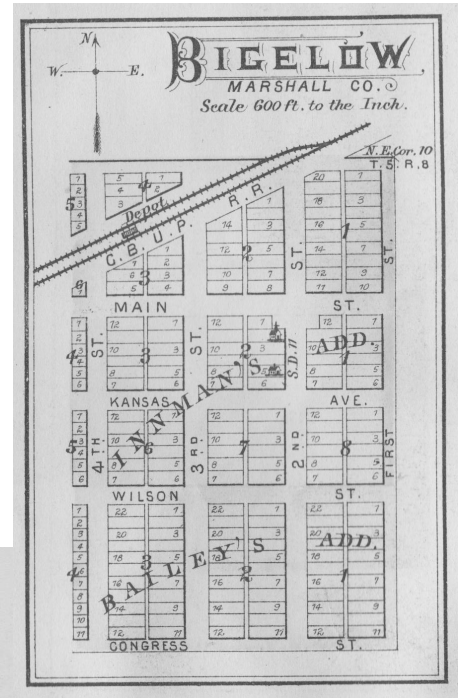
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After many years of cussing and discussing the idea, the winners were the Corps of Engineers and the cities that would be protected by the dam. Construction began in the late 1950's.

Everything in the flood plain of Tuttle Creek reservoir was condemned, torn down and/or moved by the Federal government.... houses, farm buildings, entire towns and even cemeteries. The communities of Randolph, Garrison, Cleburne and others in

Riley County were effected as well as Irving, Bigelow and Barrett in Marshall County, thirty miles or more upstream from the dam. By 1961 the river valleys were cleared and all that remain today are a few rock foundations covered with undergrowth.

The photos that follow are from vintage postcards, mostly photographed in the early 1900's... fond memories of what used to be.



At right: Bigelow, on the Black Vermillion river, was founded in 1881 at a rock quarry site. The school is at far right.



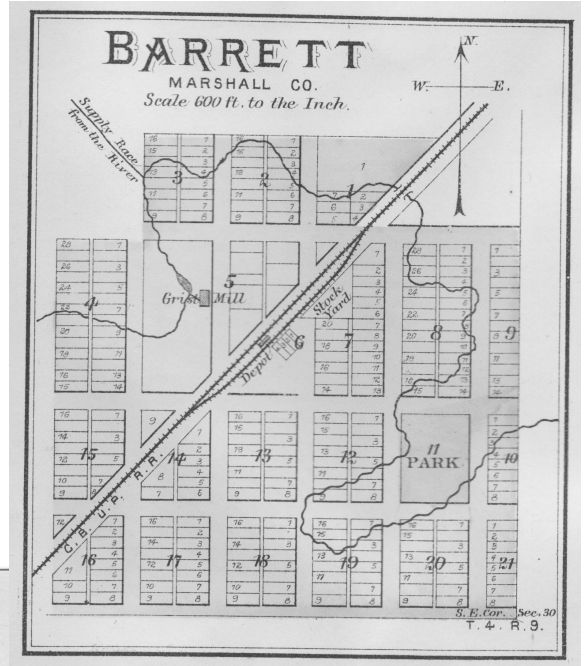
Below: Part of Bigelow's commercial buildings



Above: As noted on the photo, a union picnic in 1909. The railroad, who purchased most of the stone quarried at Bigelow, played a large part in the town's early history.



At right: This plat from an 1886 book probably shows more of the town than ever got built. Barrett, one of the earliest towns in Marshall County, was only about three miles upstream from Bigelow on the Black Vermillion. So far, I have not found photos of Barrett.



Below: Irving was probably the most vibrant town in southern Marshall County during the early years. On the west bank of the Big Blue where the railroad crossed the river, it was the center of commerce until Blue Rapids got established. In 1879, Irving was nearly destroyed by two tornados that hit within minutes of each other.



At left: Irving town hall

Below: Thomson's store



At left: Take note that they are scooping snow in this photo of an Irving bank dated April 30, 1907

See page 1 for more details

Ewing Family Reunion Sunday, Sept. 26, 2010

Butch Ewing
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At left and below:
**Cleburne sat on the
Big Blue river south of
Irving, a few miles into
Riley County.**



At left:
**Randolph, in Riley County, was
moved from the Blue River
valley to the top of the hill
behind it, and closer to
highway 77.**