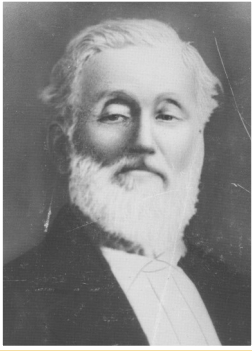


August, 2009



EWING FAMILY NEWS

Descendants of William Alexander Ewing

Hard work and perseverance pay off

Wells Township neighbors thrive

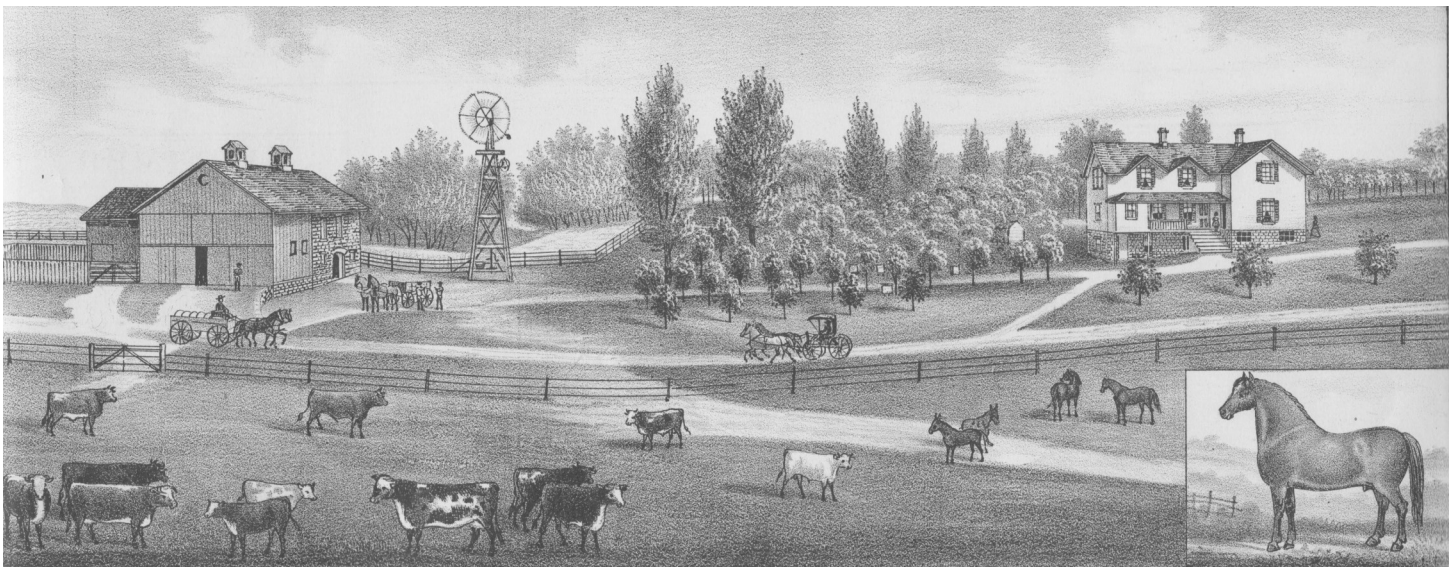
The span of time between 1870 and 1890 witnessed great changes in Marshall County, Kansas. Open prairie was transformed into cultivated fields and fenced pastures, dotted with houses and farm buildings where families lived, toiled and grew. Trails became established roads that separated properties and connected them to neighbors and centers of commerce. People came to take advantage of new land that was readily available and to establish themselves in a lifestyle of their choosing. Many chose not to stay, preferring instead to seek their fortune elsewhere, perhaps where life was less demanding. But many stayed... and prospered.

Farming and ranching were the primary endeavors that drew most people to the open prairie. Once broken, the grassland proved to be fertile and capable of growing all kinds of crops and produce... that is, when the natural elements were right. Temperature, wind, water, fire and insects proved to be the controlling factors that determined the success of each year's labors.

But those who weathered the bad years did well in the good years. It wasn't easy, but the overall effort paid off. Of course, some prospered more than others.

By the 1880s Marshall County was well settled and many of the neighbors of William Alexander Ewing had increased their holdings, some by investing large sums of cash up front, some by re-investing their good fortunes. The same had happened throughout the central plains.

Enterprising publishers from the east sent teams of cartographers into the now-developed areas to map individual counties as well as entire states. Details were converted into books and atlases that might contain plat maps as well as illustrations of towns, individual homes, businesses or homesteads. Artists would render just



RESIDENCE OF W. H. SABINS. — WELLS, MARSHALL CO., KANSAS.
SEC. 28.—TWP. 4.—RANGE 8.

YOUNG FARMER.

about anything that could be of interest... *for a fee*. Those who paid are included in the books... which probably explains why our Scotch ancestors were not represented. But some of their neighbors were. The illustrations on the following pages are from such a book published around 1889.

W.H. Sabin

The Sabin family that came to Kansas with our ancestors in 1870 homesteaded about a mile and a half east of the Ewings. The friendship that had brought them from Illinois kept them in close proximity in their new surroundings.

When he left Illinois, Willard H. Sabin had shipped his household goods and his farming equipment by rail. Since there was room in the railcar, he also included the equipment he had used for moving buildings in Illinois, something he had considered to leave behind. That after-thought proved to be a good one, as he turned out to be the only house-mover between Atchison and Concordia... a nice extra business that provided income for him and his sons when the farming didn't.

Once established in his new home, Willard found that the fertile Kansas land was well-suited for growing broomcorn, a rowcrop he had successfully grown in Illinois. Commercial grain markets hadn't been well established in Kansas in 1870... people grew mostly what they needed for their own use. Grains were grown to feed livestock and for human consumption. The broomcorn, harvested for the long fibers that grew among seeds at the top of the plant, provided a source of income during the winter months when the fibers, or "brushes," were turned into brooms and sold in stores throughout the area.

By the 1880s, the Sabins had grown their broomcorn business to the point that it required a stable of 35 draft horses and as many as 40 hired hands to plant and harvest over 500 acres, in addition to the other crops they grew. They manufactured the brooms on the farm and distributed them through merchants in a wide area. Willard Sabin was generally regarded as the "Broomcorn King" of Marshall County.

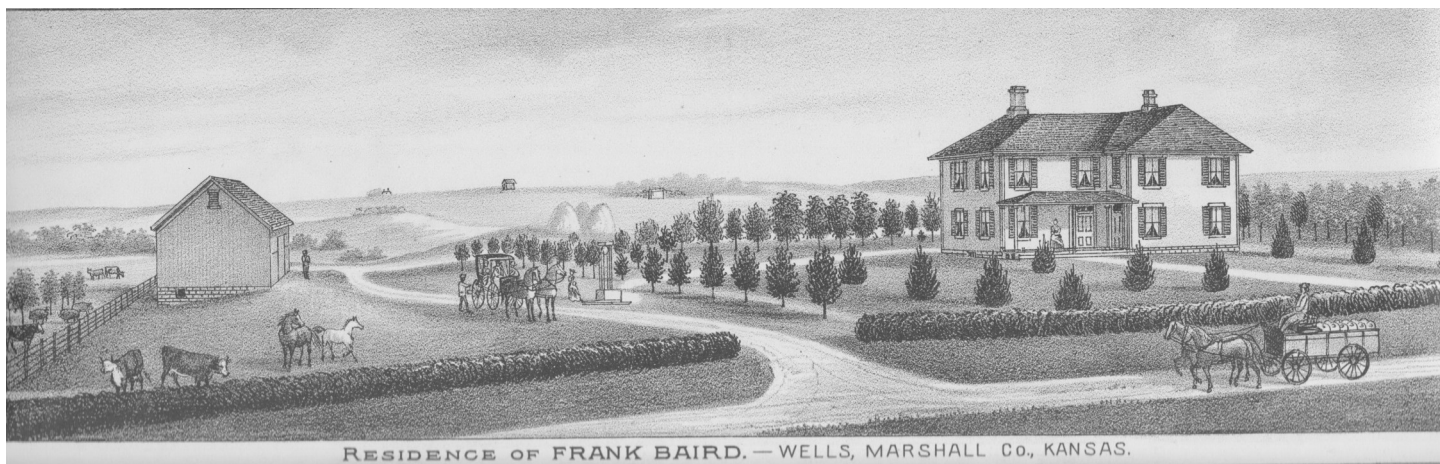
Frank Baird

A year before our ancestors moved to Kansas, Francis (Frank) Baird came to Marshall County. Like the Ewings, he came from Illinois and he also made the trip with one of his neighbors from the land of Lincoln. Baird and his fiend, Lewis Weeks, both homesteaded in Wells Township and would be close neighbors to the Ewings and Sabins when they arrived.

In addition to his quarter-section homestead a mile southeast of the Ewings, Frank Baird is shown to have acquired other land on plat maps of the 1890s. He owned 80 acres off the northwest corner of the Ewings, another 80 just west of that, and 200 acres in the next section north, above what is now Highway 9. Obviously, he had done well.

When John Ewing married Grace Risdon in 1902, they bought Baird's 80 acres that bordered the Ewing homestead, making it their home for the next 17 years.

Then, in 1910, Baird sold his other 80 to Grant Ewing. Being just a half-mile west of the Ewing homestead, that parcel adjoined land that Grant had farmed since 1894.

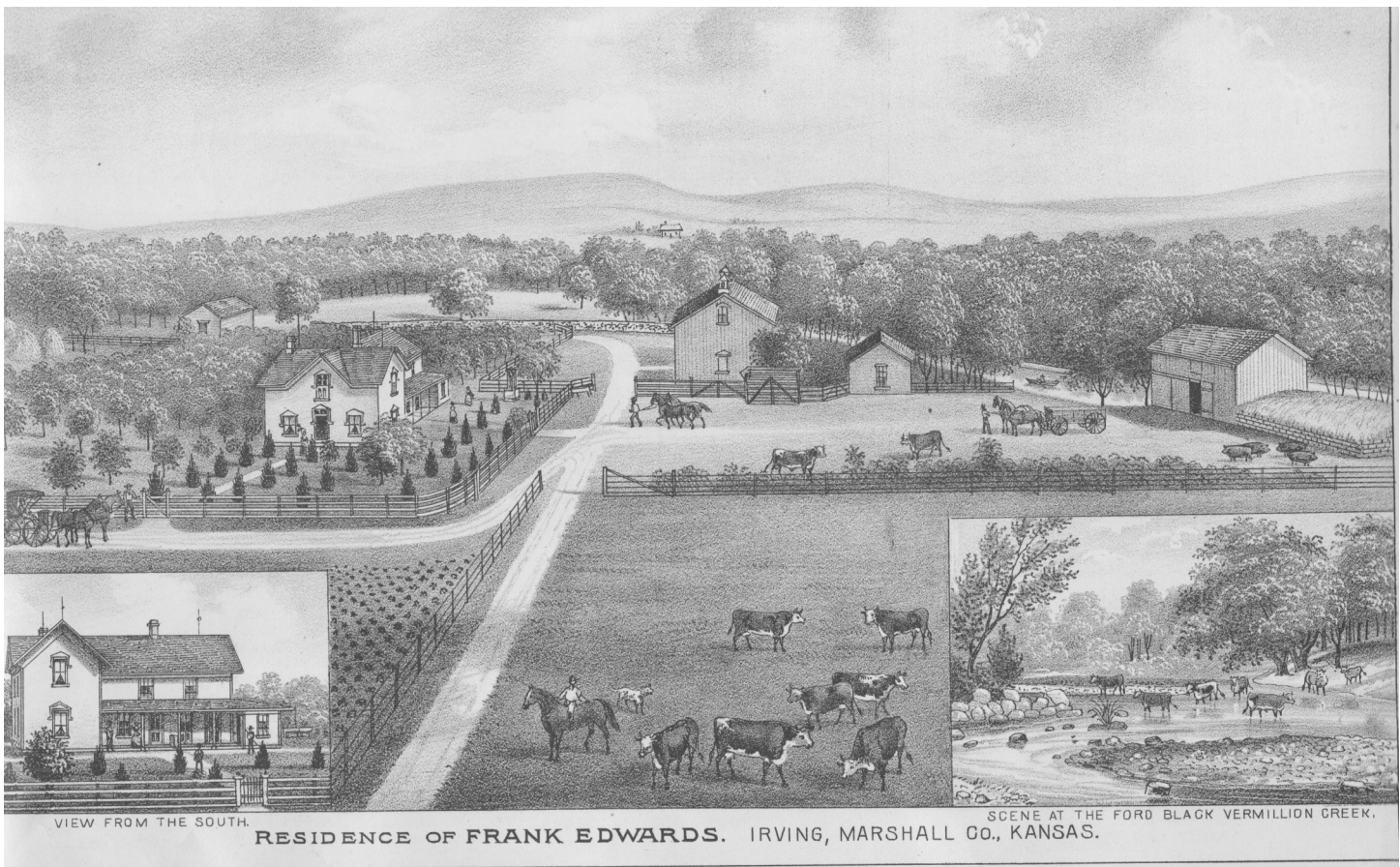


RESIDENCE OF FRANK BAIRD. — WELLS, MARSHALL Co., KANSAS.

Frank Edwards

Early Kansas census records indicate that Francis (Frank) Edwards came to the Kansas territory in May of 1857, and that he served in the Civil War. After the war, Frank acquired land southeast of Irving in what is now Bigelow Township. Some of his land was near the east bank of the Big Blue River and another plot of land was a mile or so further east, straddling the Black Vermillion River about three miles downstream from where the town of Bigelow would later be established. A couple miles further downstream, the Vermillion emptied into the Big Blue River. In later years, Rowland J. Edwards (not related to Frank Edwards as far as we know) acquired all of the land from the junction of the two rivers up to and including Frank's original Blue River property, making a parcel of over 700 acres that became known as the Edwards ranch. About five miles south of the Ewing homestead, the Edwards ranch would play a role in our family history in the 1920s when a young Ray Ewing would work on the ranch and marry the ranch foreman's daughter, Gwen Williams.

In 1865, Frank Edwards married Sarah Newbury, a relative of Carrie Mae Newbury who would become the first wife of Grant Ewing in 1894.



Walter Morgan

Born in Monmouth, England, Walter Morgan came to America in 1852 with a shipment of cattle imported by Thomas Aston and John Humphries of Elyria, Ohio. It was the third batch of white-faced cattle with curly red coats to be brought to this country from Herefordshire, England. Some of the descendants from that herd were later sold to Hiram Woodward who brought them to Marshall County in 1871, settling on a ranch between Blue Rapids and Irving, thus establishing the first line of purebred registered Hereford cattle in Kansas. Woodward continued his cattle breeding business until he died in 1877.

Meanwhile, back in Ohio, Walter Morgan began working for Thomas Aston in his Hereford business and married Aston's daughter, Sabina. Then, in early 1876, Walter Morgan brought his family and a herd of Herefords to settle on a ranch near Hiram Woodward, his former Ohio neighbor, just north of Irving, Kansas. That fall, Morgan entered some of his stock in a Kansas City industrial and agricultural fair but won no prizes

since there wasn't even a category for his breed of cattle.

It took two more years before there were enough entries — three — of Herefords at the show to be awarded prizes, and Morgan swept the category. He consistently won prizes at subsequent shows and the demand for his stock grew faster than he could supply it. Morgan brought more cattle from Ohio for resale in the Midwest and by 1902 there were 60 purebred Hereford herds in Marshall County, earning it the title of "the Herefordshire of Kansas."

Morgan's ranch was two miles west of the Ewing homestead and the land between them was owned by the Cottrell family, another large-scale cattle breeder and farmer in Wells Township.

Most of these neighbors were in Marshall County when the great prairie fire burned through Wells Township in 1873... and when the grasshoppers devoured everything the following year... and when the violent tornadoes wreaked havoc on Irving and the Vermillion valley in 1879. They were there through droughts, harsh winters and hard times. But they persisted, enduring the losses and in the long run, they were successful... some of them greatly so.

