

## **OLD RODEOS**

### Hamilton County, Kansas

Written by Ruth Ausbun

*\* Additional information added about certain people mentioned in this story*

*See another Hamilton County rodeo story written by Ruth Ausbun  
Titled... Rodeos In Hamilton County*

Rodeos have not had a very prominent place for the past few years in Hamilton County. About 1930, the first rodeo was held in Syracuse, Kansas, at the Phinas E. Dunn ranch (*See story... "Rodeos in Hamilton County"*) approximately three miles southwest of Syracuse. There had not been a rodeo in this vicinity since the year 1918 but was held quite often before that. Today, county fairs have taken the place of the rodeos to some extent.

In the year 1918, horse racing was the most popular event of the day. So today, when we think of the old rodeos, we also think of horse racing. It was the thing everyone was interested in. At that time, cowboys were numerous, and there were many famous riders. Hamilton County has always been a range country up to the present time. There are still several cattle ranches today, although the majority are wheat ranches (*farms*). In the early days, many of the cowboys rode wild horses at the rodeos. There were also cowgirls who did trick roping at the rodeo roping contests. The cowgirls were also excellent horse riders, winning many of the competitions. All fashionable girls knew how to ride. The cowgirls usually wore long-riding skirts with hoops at the bottom of the skirt, tight-fitting blouses, and usually a red handkerchief tied around their necks. Of course, some of the girls dressed in regular cowboy attire.

A few days ago, while in Syracuse, I stopped off to visit some old-timers. John Osborne was there. He came here in 1909. He was quite a rodeo fan and was very enthusiastic when telling me all about the old rodeos. His stories were very entertaining. He explained that Frank Shannon, Jim Pratt\*, and John Webster\*, were all famous horse riders in this area. They were very much interested in horse training. Jim Pratt is now the ex-postmaster. John Webster lives on a ranch near Syracuse. Frank Shannon has moved away and lives in one of the western states now. (*A newspaper clipping reveals that after visiting the state of Texas in 1925, Frank Shannon and his wife decided to leave Hamilton County and make Texas their home. They sold their home that was northwest of town to Mr. Arthur Rea.*)

When a cowboy loses his roping pony or horse, he has lost his most valuable possession. Jim Pratt sold his roping horse and is still going around feeling much woe about it. He sold the horse for four hundred dollars to one of his friends. His friend sold the horse to a horse trainer for fifteen hundred dollars.

I also remember hearing about another popular cowboy from Hamilton County named Bud. He had a big red horse that he rode. The red stallion was known far and wide over the country for his quickness, intelligence, and beauty. The red stallion had never been beaten at any of the contests that he entered. Bud had bought him from a man in Wichita, Kansas when the stallion was just a colt. He named him red because the horse was such a bright red color. Bud rode him in many steer roping contests, and Red became known as one of the best roping horses in the West. One day Bud was on his way back home from town. The trailer in which Red was riding overturned and the horse was injured so severely he had to be shot. Bud could not bring himself to give the mercy shot, so a passing motorist did the deed for him while Bud walked down the road for a bit. A partnership of many years between a cowboy and his horse is not a thing to be broken lightly. Bud's grief was sincere and a real thing for him.

As mentioned earlier, there were many cowgirls in the roping contests then, and recently the Chicago, Illinois board of education elected to instruct schoolchildren in the fast art of roping. It is supposed to be a healthy exercise for kids. It was not a part of the education long ago as almost all the children and grownups knew how to rope horses and steers. That was everyone's interest at the time.

There were always strings of bucking horses, bronc riders, calf roping contests, and steer wrestling events at every rodeo. The crowd was always thrilled during the cowgirl bronc-riding contests. They did some neat trick riding, and roping and these girls sometimes went to the top of the game. The cowboys and cowgirls were paid a nice sum of money, or the winners received prizes.

The old rodeos were usually held on Thanksgiving Day or on the Fourth of July. At these events, all the cowmen in this part of the country would attend a rodeo. Various ranchers would put their top hands in a ranch hand contest. It was the type of fun they couldn't resist.

Many old-timers were in the line-up at the old rodeos and competed with the newer bronc riders and steer tossers for the prize monies. They say that those broncs and steers roughed up the contestants badly. The highlight of all the events was the trick riding and roping contests. All it takes to make a champion rider is the skill of grace and supreme recklessness. The cowboys had all that it took to make a great trick rider.

I have been told of a very exciting incident that took place during one of the rodeo events. A dog was barking at some of the horses. The director ordered his helper to get the dog out of the ring. The helper (Bob) took after him on his roping horse, but the dog thought he was playing with him. He enjoyed the chase and took off down the track with the man tearing behind. Finally, the dog heard Bob's racing horse on its heels and jumped into the grandstand. He landed yelping into the lap of a woman who let out a scream of terror. Things calmed down, and the spectacular entry went on, but the little puppy nearly stole the show.

One of the especially popular events was the chicken head race, where the man who catches his quota of chickens without missing one gets all the chickens. Also, there were many winners for the wild steer-riding and the novelty races, which brought many laughs.

There were always many different types of animals in the old rodeos, much like a circus. Mr. Osborne delighted in telling the following story that happened at one of the rodeos. He explained how an animal trainer handled his lion performers during a storm. As some animals become panicky and are likely to grow unmanageable when a storm gets underway, a trainer needs to recognize the signs of restlessness shown by some of his more sensitive performers. As soon as the clouds begin to gather, he must take action.

The most severe danger as far as the weather is concerned is the sudden development of an electrical storm while the trainer is in the arena with his animals. A trainer narrowly escaped a storm of this kind when he was in the ring with his lions and tigers putting them through their paces. He missed by seconds, being killed by the thunder and lightning storm.

On this day, there had been no indications of a storm until the man entered the arena. He could not tell that the heavens were planning an electrical storm, so he gave no thought to the weather conditions. Without warning, as the trainer neared the two-thirds point of his act, the arena suddenly drew dark. The loosened poles of the tent structure could be heard bobbing up and down. It was up to the trainer to keep his eyes on the animals. As soon as the arena began to darken, the creatures started to show restlessness, and they became unresponsive. Some of them became positively uncontrollable, including the easygoing tiger named Venus. The trainer was getting ready to put her through the rollover stunt in the lightly darkened arena when there was a terrific clap of thunder. He had tremendous difficulty prevailing upon Venus to leave her high seat for the floor pedestal, from which he cued her to perform the rollover. The trainer used all his persuasiveness at his command, and just as she was moving her paws over the edge of the seat top, indicating that she was ready to perform, there was another clap of thunder that sent her quivering back. She withdrew so hastily that she almost went toppling off of her pedestal.

The sound of the thunder began again. The trainer made a quick decision to finish the rollover as quickly as possible and skip the rest of the act. Again, he started to cue Venus to leave her pedestal, thinking it would be better to continue onward, as it would make the audience uneasy if they stopped.

Overhead, one could see that the dislodged tent poles were swinging. The situation was becoming more severe for a blow from one of the heavy poles was capable of killing a spectator. The trainer feverishly resumed his efforts to coax Venus from her high seat. After what seemed an hour to the spectators (but in reality, it was only a

few minutes), the tiger came scrambling down to the floor of the arena to perform the rollover.

The lights from the big top began to behave strangely as the trainer gave Venus the soft whistle cue to leave the low seat and come towards him. The animals arranged on pedestals around the arena grew more restless as the lights began to flicker. The trainer did what he could to complete the tricks and finish the show. Then one of the workers helped get the animals out of the arena. The tent was all ballooned out, and the howling wind was getting under the canvas. Overhead, the loosened poles were swinging more wildly than before, and spectators began dodging them.

The animals were out in the arena being led back into their cages when there came a terrific downpour of rain accompanied by thunder and lightning. Suddenly the arena looked as if it were on fire. Then as quickly as it came, the fire flashed out, and all was in semi-darkness as the electric lights began to flicker again.

If the trainer had not cut the act short, he would have been in the arena with his lions and tigers when lightning struck.

#### Additional Information

JAMES "JIM" BENTON PRATT



JAMES AND LUCY ELTON PRATT

50th Anniversary

*Photograph provided by Grace Pittner*

JAMES "JIM" BENTON PRATT, son of Alfred Pratt (1839-1927) and Mary Louisa McMurry

(1843-1902), was born on 18 Sep 1878 near Silver Lake in Shawnee County, Kansas. He married LUCY "ELTON" STONE, daughter of Arthur Stone (1851-1883) and Lydia Ann Raney (1854-1935), on 12 Dec 1900 in Syracuse, Hamilton County, Kansas. Lucy "Elton" was born on 7 Mar 1878 in Versailles, Brown County, Illinois.

Jim and Elton had the following children: JAMES BENTON PRATT, JR. (28 Dec 1909-21 Jul 1912), ARTHUR DARNELL PRATT (5 Jul 1911-8 Aug 1912), BETTY LOUISE (PRATT) GOELLER (5 Jan 1914-8 Feb 2004), MALVINA "MALLIE" ELIZABETH PRATT (6 Oct 1915-4 Oct 2002), and ERMA L. (PRATT) WALTER (28 Oct 1917-29 Dec 2014).

The loss of their first two children left Jim and Elton without any children until their daughter, Betty, was born in 1914. Malvina and Erma followed.

The family lived a very productive and successful life.

James passed away on 23 Jun 1956. Elton died on 8 Nov 1958. Their burial was at the Syracuse Cemetery in Syracuse, Kansas.

### NEWSPAPER WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT FOR JAMES B. PRATT & LUCY ELTON STONE

*The Syracuse (Kansas) Journal - Friday, 14 Dec 1900*

#### A HAPPY WEDDING

The happiest wedding that has occurred in Syracuse in a long time was that of Miss Lucy Elton Stone and Mr. James Benton Pratt, at 8 p.m. last Wednesday. At the home of the bride's mother, Mrs. A. Cole, there had assembled more than forty guests, most of whom had first met the bride and groom as schoolmates, ten to fifteen short and happy years ago. As the last strains of the wedding march died away, the young couple entered the room, preceded by Miss Edith Boggs and Mr. Ford Crittenden, and took their position before the officiating clergyman, Rev. E. E. Robbins, who performed the brief impressive service.

The bride looked her part in every detail in her elegant white silk costume, while the groom, handsome and serene, stood with manly fortitude peculiar to grooms generally. They are indeed a handsome couple.

After the congratulations, they enjoyed a delicious supper.

Soon after the guests had taken their leave, Mr. Pratt took his bride to the family homestead, four miles west of Syracuse, where they will reside.

Mrs. Alfred Pratt was unable to be present at her son's wedding, having to stay at her home in Indiana, where her aged father requires constant presence.

Those present were: Mr. Alfred Pratt, Mr. and Mrs. A. Cole, Mr. and Mrs. Thurston Pratt, Mr. and Mrs. L. P. Worden, Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Humphrey, Mrs. Sarah Raney, the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. E. E. Robbins, Mr. and Mrs. A. L. McNeilly, Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Shannon, Mr. and Mrs. Francis J. Wensinger, Mr. and Mrs. George O. Hurst, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Block, Misses Jennie and Etta Stone, Miss Edith Boggs of Coolidge, Miss Mary Thomas, Miss Daisy Rinehart, Misses Julia and Rhoda Potter, Miss Mintie Warner, Miss Fannie Jones, Miss Alice Jones, Misses Ethel and Eva Sawyer, Miss Mildred Zimmerman, Miss Inez Wagoner, Miss Ruth Hubbard, Miss Pearl Willis, Miss Bertha Bay, Miss Gay Scranton, Miss Grace Raney, Mr. C. H. Raney, Mr. Ford Crittenden, Mr. E. M. Scott, Dr. C. F. Harrison, Mr. Harry Zimmerman, Mr. C. F. Lauman, and Mr. J. F. Zinkler.

**Newspaper article  
JAMES "JIM" PRATT**

*The Syracuse (Kansas) Journal – Friday, 14 Aug 1903*

Jim Pratt won the three-quarter-mile dash at Dodge City on Tuesday with eight entries. Frank Shannon's mare took third place. Jim is winning every race that he enters, and we hope he will continue to have good luck. Next week he goes to St. John, then back to Lamar, Rocky Ford, and Pueblo.

*Many thanks to Joanice Jantz, from the Hamilton County, Kansas Historical Society for providing the following James Pratt and family obituaries*

**Newspaper Obituaries for  
JAMES BENTON PRATT  
AND FAMILY**

**JAMES BENTON PRATT**

*The Syracuse (Kansas) Journal - Thursday, 28 Jun 1956*

**DEATH UNEXPECTEDLY TAKES J. B. PRATT**

James "Jim" B. Pratt, a well-known Hamilton County citizen who had lived here for seventy years, died unexpectedly at his home Saturday night from a heart attack. He was ill for only a few minutes and died before a doctor could reach him. On the morning of his death, Mr. Pratt was downtown as usual. He was in good health and was feeling as well as ever, up to the time of his seizure.

James Benton Pratt was born on 18 Sep 1878 in Shawnee County near Silver Lake, Kansas, and departed this life at 11:00 p.m. on 23 Jun 1956, at the age of 77 years, 9 months, and 5 days. His father, Alfred Pratt, was a native of Kentucky, while his mother, Mary L. McMurray Pratt, was born in Putnam County, Indiana.

At the age of 7 years, Jim Pratt, as he was known throughout his lifetime, together with his family, moved to Hamilton County and took up residence six miles west of Syracuse in what was better known at that time as the Pratt Ranch. Jim attended Syracuse schools and graduated from Syracuse High School. He furthered his education at the Kansas State Agricultural College, in Manhattan, the following year.

After spending the greater part of a year in El Paso, Texas, working in a furniture store with his brother-in-law, Eugene B. Welch, Jim, at the insistence of his father, returned to the Pratt Ranch near Syracuse so the two of them could go into the cattle business together.

Later that same year, on 12 Dec 1900, Jim united in marriage to his school-hood sweetheart, Lucy Elton Stone, also of Syracuse. To this union, five children were born; James Benton, Jr., who died at the age of 2 ½ years; Arthur Darnell, who also died just 17 days later, at the age of 13 months; and Betty Louise, Malvina Elizabeth, and Erma Lucille, all living.

Although primarily a rancher, Mr. Pratt was also associated with Ray Jackson in real estate and broomcorn business.

Jim followed his father's example, becoming an active member of this community at an early age. Throughout his lifetime, Jim held numerous public offices, including county treasurer, postmaster, deputy sheriff, sheriff, and undersheriff. To each office, Jim gave the best that was in him; honesty, sincerity, straightforwardness, and integrity. His interest in public affairs and politics became stimulated when he served as a page, at the age of 12, in the Kansas State legislature with his father, a representative from this county. Jim ended his career as a public servant as under-sheriff of this county in January 1954.

In addition to Jim's interest in public affairs, he always maintained an avid and active interest in sports. From his early boyhood, Jim was a horseman. He established the world records of the 5-mile relay in Pueblo in 1903 and then westward to set other world records in the 2 ½ mile and 2-mile relay races. In addition to establishing these records, Jim trained and raced thoroughbred horses throughout the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

At the turn of the century, Jim and the late Dr. C. F. Harrison organized a local baseball club. An outstanding baseball player, he was a pitcher and shortstop on some of the best teams Syracuse ever fielded. People who remember him say Jim could have been a major league star had he entered professional baseball. After his playing days were over, Jim coached and managed teams until he was 65 years old. Taking up golf in his fifties, he became a par shooter, and at one time, held the Syracuse club championship. He played regularly on the Syracuse course until this year and kept his membership in the local golf club.

Jim leaves surviving him his devoted wife of Syracuse; three daughters, Betty Goeller, Mallie Pratt, and Erma Walters, all of Wichita; four nieces, four nephews, and many other relatives and friends. Two sons preceded him in death.

The funeral services, conducted on Tuesday afternoon, were at the Syracuse Methodist Church, with Rev. Clifford Moody officiating. Burial was in the Syracuse Cemetery.

Pallbearers were E. A. Hoppe, Clarence Owings, C. J. Lannon, Paul Johnson, Roy Howell, and K. O. Brown.

### LUCY "ELTON" (STONE) PRATT

*The Syracuse (Kansas) Journal - Wednesday, 12 Nov 1958*

#### PIONEER RESIDENT DIED SATURDAY

Mrs. James B. Pratt (*Lucy Elton Stone Pratt*) died at St. Joseph's Hospital in Wichita last Saturday afternoon, on November 8<sup>th</sup> and at the age of 80 years, 8 months, and 1 day.

She had been ill for several months and had spent some of that time in the hospital. When her condition permitted, she lived with her three daughters, so they could care for her. All lived in Wichita.

Her situation became critical three weeks ago, and she was hospitalized at that time. Elton (*as she was known throughout her lifetime*), was born on 7 Mar 1878 in Versailles, Illinois. She was the daughter of Arthur Stone, a native of Illinois, and Lydia Raney, born in Madison, Indiana. They came to western Kansas by train and prairie schooner and settled in Stanton County when she was seven years old. They moved to Syracuse in November of 1885.

Elton attended the Syracuse schools and later was in the dressmaking and millinery business with Julia Potter Coble, in Syracuse and at Holly, Colorado.

On 12 Dec 1900, Elton united in marriage to her school sweetheart, James Benton Pratt. To this union, five children were born; James Benton Jr., who died at the age of 2 ½ years; Arthur Darnell, who died at the age of 13 months; and three daughters, Betty, Mallie, and Erma, all living.

Elton was active in church work as long as her health permitted. She joined the local Methodist Church in June 1891, and at the time of her death, was the only member having a membership for a period of years. She was a devoted and loving wife and mother, and her lifetime interests were centered around her family, home, and friends.

Her husband preceded her in death, and survivors are three daughters, Betty Goeller, Mallie Pratt, and Erma Walters, all of Wichita; six grandchildren; three nieces, six nephews, and many other relatives and friends.

Funeral services were held on Tuesday at 2:20 p.m. in the Methodist Church, conducted by Rev. A. B. Madison. Burial was in the Syracuse Cemetery.



## Children of James Benton Pratt & Lucy "Elton" Stone

### JAMES BENTON PRATT JR.

*Syracuse (Kansas) Journal and Republican News - Friday, 26 Jul 1912*

James Benton Pratt Jr., the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Pratt, died at the family home last Sunday Morning, July 21<sup>st</sup>, after an illness of about two weeks. Little Benton was born on 28 Dec 1909, and at the time of his death, he was two years, seven months, and twenty-two days old.

The death of little Benton made sad the heart of every man, woman, and child in Syracuse who has an acquaintance with the family or who had ever seen the little boy. He was an unusually winsome child, one that always attracted notice wherever seen, whose handsome features, winning ways and large brown eyes made him the pride of the father's and mother's heart and popular with all those who knew him.

The funeral was held at the Methodist Church on Monday at 10 o'clock. A quartet composed of Mrs. Zerbe, Mrs. Sturgis, Merle Sellers, and Frank Kirkpatrick rendered three beautiful selections and the pastor preached on the mission of child life in the world.

The church filled with sympathizing friends and neighbors, and the many eyes dim with tears testified how the death of the little fellow had touched the whole community. The death of little Benton and the severe illness of a younger child, concerning whose recovery there are grave fears shroud this home in deepest sorrow. The parents have the community's sympathy and deepest concern.

### ARTHUR DARNELL PRATT

*The cemetery headstone gives the name as Arthur Darnoll Pratt*

*The Syracuse (Kansas) Journal - Friday, 9 Aug 1912*

The friends of Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Pratt will regret to learn that for the second time in the brief space of seventeen days, death invaded their home and took from them their only remaining child, little Arthur Darnell Pratt, born 5 Jul 1911, and died 7 Aug 1912, aged one year, one month, and two days. About two weeks ago, the child was taken to Colorado Springs in hopes that the cooler climate there might assist in the improvement of the little one, but all in vain, death occurring at the latter place on the date above mentioned.

For a long time, the death of the little one has been expected. The feeble life has hung in the balance for many months. Now and then, he would have a little better night than usual, now and then a day less fraught with pain, and now and then they would attempt a little play, and the flame of hope would be fanned in the hearts of the parents. But, after long days of ministrations and nights of the weary vigil, the death angel passed over. While the parents were

in a measure reconciled to their child's death, their sorrow is intensified by the loss of their other son earlier, and their deaths have left them childless.

The funeral was held from the Methodist Church Thursday morning, conducted by the pastor, and the remains were laid to rest beside those of little Benton, who died less than three weeks ago. In this double sorrow, the bereaved parents have the sympathy of all.

The floral decorations were exceptionally fine. The casket was reposed against a background of beautiful vines and flowers, handsome wreaths, emblems and clusters, and loving friends' gifts. Those whom were last to leave the cemetery bore away in their minds the picture of two little graves covered deeply with flowers.

### BETTY LOUISE (PRATT) GOELLER

*The Garden City (Kansas) Telegram – Monday, 9 Feb 9, 2004*

Betty Louise Pratt Goeller, 90, died Sunday, 8 Feb 2004, at her home in Wichita. She was born on 5 Jan 1914, at her grandmother's home in Syracuse, to James Benton and Lucy Elton Stone Pratt. She lived south of Syracuse on the Bear Creek family ranch. A 1932 graduate of Syracuse High School, she received her two-year degree in accounting from Wichita Business College.

On 18 Aug 1935, she married William Lloyd Goeller at her mother's home in Syracuse, and they moved to Cullison, (*Pratt County*) Kansas, later that year. On 15 Oct 1949, they moved to Wichita, where she worked as a social service clerk for Social and Rehabilitation Services. She was on the Wichita School Board and worked for Wichita State University until retiring at 70 years.

A homemaker, Mrs. Goeller, was a member of East Heights United Methodist Church at Wichita, was a leader for 4-H, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, enjoyed bowling when she was younger, and enjoyed her 88 rose bushes, knitting Afghans, and knitting caps for the Salvation Army. She also wrote short stories and had a book published, "The Life and Times of a Small Town Girl," her autobiography.

Survivors include two sons; James Darnell of Tucson, Arizona, and Richard Lloyd of Wichita; a daughter, Betty Lucinda of Wichita; a sister, Erma Lucille Walters of Oklahoma City; five grandchildren; one nephew; and one niece. She was preceded in death by her husband; her parents; a son, Billy Dean Goeller, two brothers, James Benton Pratt, Jr. and Arthur Darnell Pratt; and a sister, Malvina Elizabeth "Mallie" Pratt.

The graveside service will be at 11 a.m. MST on Thursday at Syracuse Cemetery.

### MALVINA ELIZABETH PRATT

*The Garden City (Kansas) Telegram - Monday, 7 Oct 2002*

The funeral for Malvina Elizabeth "Mallie" Pratt, 86, of Syracuse, will be at 2 p.m. MST on Tuesday at the First United Methodist Church, with the Rev. Bill Fitzgerald officiating. Graveside service will follow in the Syracuse Cemetery.

Miss Pratt died Friday, 4 Oct 2002, at St. Catherine Hospital in Garden City. She was born on 6 Oct 1915, in the Bear Creek community in Hamilton County, the daughter of James Benton and Lucy Elton Stone Pratt. She lived on the Bear Creek family farm until the family moved to Syracuse when she was four years old. In 1933, she graduated from Syracuse High School, where she received numerous music awards and known as a fast typist.

A music lover, she played the piano, flute, and violin. She continued her education by taking the Etude Music Correspondence Course. In 1939, she moved to Wichita, and it was there that she performed piano recitals on a local radio station. A short time later, she moved to Topeka, where she worked for the State of Kansas. She then took a position with the U.S. government and worked during World War II as a head supervisor in Washington, D.C. In 1952, she returned to Wichita and worked for Goodyear Tire Company. In 1958, she moved back to Syracuse, sold tickets at the Northrup Theater, and gave private piano lessons at her home.

Miss Pratt attended Syracuse First United Methodist Church, was an avid reader, and enjoyed doing genealogy research, collecting jewelry, and painting.

Survived are two sisters, Betty Louise Goeller of Wichita, and Erma Lucile Walters of Oklahoma City; three nephews; and two nieces. She was preceded in death by her parents; two infant brothers, James Benton Pratt, Jr., and Arthur Darnell Pratt; a brother-in-law; and a nephew.

### ERMA LUCILLE (PRATT) WALTERS

*The Oklahoman (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma) - Friday, 2 Jan 2015*

28 Oct 1917 - 29 Dec 2014

OKLAHOMA CITY - Erma Lucille Walters, 97, arrived at her "great reward" on 29 Dec 2014. Erma was born to the late Jim and Lucy Elton Pratt in Bear Creek Township, Kansas. She graduated from Syracuse High School (Kansas) in 1935 and, soon after, had her first teaching job in a one-room schoolhouse north of Kendall, Kansas. Her teaching career spanned many years.

Erma married William H. Walters on 27 Dec 1944. Together, they had two children. Erma resided in Kansas for 42 years before moving to Oklahoma City with her family. Living in Oklahoma City, her natural leadership ability led her to serve as one of the first PTA Presidents of Hoover Junior High School and serve as President of the Mistletoe Chapter of ABWA. She worked in market research, movie auditing, and merchandising. Erma was very young at heart and active, as evidenced by her hobbies of golf, bowling, gardening, knitting, and sewing.

Erma was very proud of her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and is survived by her son, William A. "Fred" Walters (Suzanne); daughter, Halcyon Hall (Dale); five

grandchildren, Shelby Varnell, Annexie Kunzman, Shay Varnell (Stacy), Staci Hall, and Kevin Hall; and six great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, father, mother, two brothers, and two sisters.

The family wishes to thank Choice Hospice for the loving and kind care they relentlessly gave to Erma and the support given to her family. The family couldn't have made it without Denise, Stuart, Jane, Kim, Sherry, Amanda, and others.

### Additional Information

#### JOHN WEBSTER

**JOHN FRANCIS WEBSTER**, son of Samuel Clark Wester (1832-1895) and Mary Eastman (1837-1900), was born on 23 Dec 1855 in South Wayne, Lafayette County, Wisconsin. In 1880, he was found living with his parents in Sheridan, Ottawa County, Kansas.

John Webster married **LIDA HOUSE** on 2 Jan 1889. Lida was born on 13 Oct 1872 in Bates County, Missouri. By the year 1900, they had moved to Hamilton County, Kansas. Two children were born in their marriage: **SYLVIA EDITH WEBSTER** (1891-1972) and **BEN RAYMOND WEBSTER** (1898-1967).

Lida died on 15 Sep 1903 in Syracuse, Hamilton County, Kansas, and buried at the Syracuse Cemetery. On 27 Dec 1904, John Webster married **ANNABEL HOGUE**, daughter of Isaac Hogue (1834-1916) and Isabelle Thompson Findley (1843-1900). Annabel was born on 7 Oct 1869 in Gerlaw, Warren County, Illinois. She was first married to Benjamin Woodley in about 1884, and they were divorced just after the year 1900.

John and Annabel left Kansas in 1926, moving to Talent, Jackson County, Oregon. John worked as a farmer while living in Kansas and continued to farm while living in Oregon until about 1935.

He died on 9 Oct 1942, and Annabel passed away on 19 Jun 1945, both in Talent, Oregon. Burial was at the Mountain View Cemetery in Ashland, Jackson County, Oregon.

#### Newspaper Obituaries

**JOHN WEBSTER and his two wives**

**LIDA (HOUSE) WEBSTER & ANNABEL (HOGUE) WEBSTER**

**LIDA (HOUSE) WEBSTER**

*The Syracuse (Kansas) Journal - Friday, 18 Sep 1903*

**MRS. JOHN WEBSTER IS DEAD**

This community was surprised and shocked Tuesday morning to learn of the death of Mrs. John Webster. She had been in delicate health for two weeks or more but had continued at her usual work until Wednesday of last week, when she drove to town and taken very sick. When she reached her home, four miles west of town, she went to bed and never arose from it. Mr. Webster reached home Sunday morning. Drs. Harrison and Helwig, the latter of Garden City, performed an operation, but blood poisoning had set in, and it was too late.

An intimate friend of the family furnished us the following tribute to her life:

Lida House was born in Bates County, Missouri, on 13 Oct 1872. Most of her life was spent in Colorado, up to 2 Jan 1889, when she was married to John Webster. Two children were born to this union; Silvia, now aged 12 years, and Bennie, aged 5. Her life was one continuous span of self-sacrifice and labor to gain competence and educate her children. She seemed to forget herself and was always ready to do for others. She was a helpmeet indeed in every sense of the word, never speaking evil of any kind but always prepared to help in time of need.

Mrs. Webster's father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. W. House of Amity Colorado, were present at the funeral. Also attending were her two sisters, Mrs. Lettie Green and Mrs. Jennie Hodgekins, her three brothers Ben, Willis, and Elish House, and her cousin Miss Rose Morris, all from Amity and Holly, Colorado.

The funeral was held from the family home Wednesday morning at 10 o'clock, with Rev. E. E. Robbins conducting the services. A large number of friends of the family followed the remains to the last resting place in the Syracuse Cemetery.

### JOHN FRANCIS WEBSTER

*Medford (Oregon) Mail Tribune – Monday, 12 Oct 1942*

#### JOHN F. WEBSTER OF TALENT DIES

John Francis Webster, a resident of Talent for the last 16 years, passed away at this home on Friday at the age of 86. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Tuesday at the Litwiller Funeral Home in Ashland (*Jackson County, Oregon*).

Mr. Webster was born in South Wayne, Wisconsin, on 23 Dec 1855. In his early manhood, he went to Syracuse, Kansas, and engaged in stock-raising. He was married to Lida House on 29 Jan 1888 and born to this union were two children, Ben Webster and Mrs. R. C. (Silvia) Logan, both of Talent. Mrs. Webster passed away on 15 Sep 1903. Mr. Webster was then married to Annabelle Woodley, on 27 Dec 1904, coming to Talent 22 years later.

Mr. Webster was a member of the Mason Lodge of Syracuse for over 50 years. Besides his son and daughter, his wife survives him: one brother, George Webster of Socorro, New Mexico: two stepchildren, Homer Woodley and Mrs. J. A. Stone of Syracuse: four grandchildren and three

great-grandchildren.

## ANNABEL (HOGUE) WEBSTER

*Medford (Oregon) Mail Tribune 20 Jun 1945*

ANNABEL WEBSTER IS TAKEN BY DEATH AT HER HOME IN TALENT

ASHLAND (*Oregon*), June 20 – Mrs. Annabel Webster, 76, passed away at the home of her stepdaughter, Mrs. R. C. Logan, in Talent yesterday. She was born in Gerlaw, (*Warren County*) Illinois, and she spent some time as a resident of Talent. After her husband died in 1942, she made her home with a daughter in Kansas, returning to Talent when the daughter passed away in May.

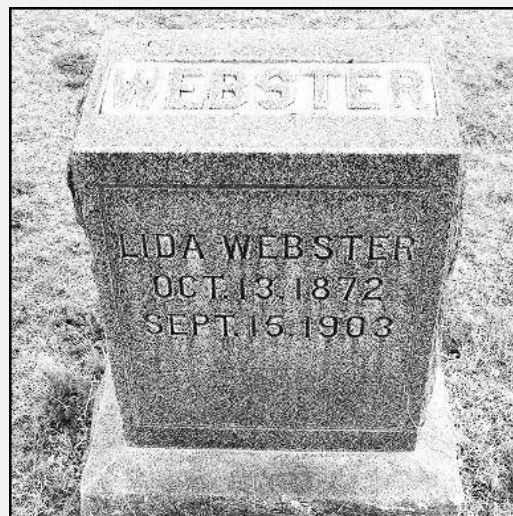
A son in Kansas, plus two stepchildren survives her: Mrs. Sylvia Logan and Ben Webster, both of Talent.

Funeral services will be Friday at 10:30 a.m. at the Litwiller Funeral Home, with interment in Mountain View Cemetery.

### Cemetery Headstones

JOHN WEBSTER and his two wives  
LIDA (HOUSE) WEBSTER and ANNABEL (HOGUE) WEBSTER

LIDA (HOUSE) WEBSTER



SYRACUSE CEMETERY

Syracuse, Hamilton County, Kansas

*Headstone photograph provided by Leon Barton*



JOHN FRANCIS WEBSTER and ANNABEL (HOGUE) WEBSTER

MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY  
Ashland, Jackson County, Oregon  
*Headstone photographs provided by Jodi Respini*

