

ELIZABETH C. (LYMAN) BETHEL

Haskell County, Kansas

Notes written by Elizabeth C. Bethel

Rewritten by Eva Mae Cooper



ELIZABETH CLEMENTINE. (LYMAN) BETHEL

Sublette, Kansas

Photograph provided by Craig Turner

Elizabeth Clementine Lyman was born on February 12, 1858, near Dadeville, Dade County, Missouri. She spent most of her childhood days on the farm with her parents. She was one of eleven children: five boys, and six girls. Elizabeth only got to the ninth grade in a country school. Her father, John Lyman, was born in Ohio, and her mother was born in Tennessee.

In 1877, Elizabeth was united in marriage to Virginius L. Bethel, who was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on May 15, 1848. When he was six years old, his parents moved to New York, and later on to Illinois. When he was 19 years old, he left Illinois and moved to Missouri.

Elizabeth wrote... *"I am the mother of eight children, four of whom were born in Missouri and four in Kansas. Lillian, the oldest, taught school before she was married to Robert L. Davis, who was an employee of the Santa Fe Railroad. She died several years ago, leaving a husband and six children. Our son John W. lives in Oklahoma.*

Our daughter, Mamie E., married J. T. Miller, a Star Route Mail Carrier, and they live in Sublette, Kansas. Our son, Leroy, is married and lives in Whitefish, Montana. He is employed with the Great Northern Railroad. Our son Fred served in the World War and died in 1927, leaving his wife and two children. Our daughter Mabel lives on a farm in Colorado, and our son, Leon, is a Ford car dealer in Sublette. I have forty grandchildren and twenty great-grandchildren.”

In March of 1885, Virginius Bethel started with others to find a home in the west. It was a long journey with a team and wagon. They finally landed on the Cimarron River near where Liberal is now located. They did not like the sand hills, so they went north and stopped at the “flats”. During the summer, Virginius found work in Dodge City, known then as a wild town. He saw many tragic sights. During the summer, he filed for some land and built the old sod shanty on what was then a part of Finney County. In November, fifty miles south of Dodge City, Elizabeth and their children joined him, and they were happy, little knowing what they were to face in the future. The first great problem was water. It had to be hauled from the Cimarron River fifteen miles away. Then how careful they had to be to make it last as long as possible. About three days for watering the team and for house use was all they could haul in one day. There were no streams on the flats, but a well had been added to her brother-in-law’s place. So in a few weeks, Virginius and Elizabeth had plenty of water that was much closer. It is believed to be the first well on the flats. When it was finished, it was 207 feet deep.

Virginius was a carpenter, and he had plenty of work to do in the little town that sprung up almost overnight. He needed to be gone away from home most of the time.

During the first year of their pioneer life, schools started, and the county seat’s location was “being discussed”. This created much disturbance among the people of the new counties. Many fights and many shootings took place, but when it was over and everything settled, times began to change, and people were friendlier. For a while, there were no Sunday schools or churches in the county. To pass the time and for religious services, they gathered at different homes and sang on Sunday afternoons. *“We enjoyed those afternoons as much as the people enjoy the Sunday baseball games today.”*

The schoolhouses were very simple tiny sod houses. Teacher’s wages then were only \$18.00 to \$30.00. Soon, an excellent schoolhouse was built in Santa Fe. After that, they had an outstanding school with all of the grades, but there was no high school in the county for several years. Therefore, many children in those days could not possibly get a high school education. *“We now have a grand high school building at Sublette.”*

Santa Fe remained the county seat until 1920. In 1916, they built the first railroad going through Haskell County. It was located six miles south of Old Santa Fe. It was

then necessary for the town to move. Soon there was a fight between the east and west sides of the county as to where the county seat should be located, Satanta or Sublette. The case went to the Supreme Court twice before being decided in favor of Sublette. Then the fine courthouse was built, and all was quiet.

Elizabeth wrote... "I must go back and tell a few of the exciting and also sad experiences. The winter of 1885, our first in Kansas, was the big blizzard. I shall never forget the night of January 6, 1886. Not knowing what was coming, we were not prepared for it. The weather had been lovely up until then. My husband was working away from home, which was necessary at that time. So, the team was blanketed and tied at the south side of the barn, beside a fine millet haystack. The wind increased in speed and the snow in quantity. The blizzard lasted two nights and a day, and we were like Eskimos. The half dugout was covered entirely, windows and the doorway banked full. We did not see daylight in all of that time. The second morning we opened a window and dug the snow down into the house until my husband could get out. That was the only way we could get out for three weeks, as the snow would blow and fill up the door much faster than we could keep it shoveled out. Two of my brother-in-law were on their way home from Cimarron with coal and other supplies and lost their way and almost lost their lives as they were out both nights and a day.

On March 12 in 1886 came the awful fire. On Sunday, a fire had been raging in the northwest part of the county, and it was getting closer to us. At about 1:00 p.m., there was a sign of smoke in the west. I called my husband, and he immediately arranged the young stock in the barn. He took the plow with the work team and plowed as much as he could around the place, but it took only a few minutes for that fire to travel fifteen miles. Before he knew it, the fire was almost upon him.

He turned and ran as long as he could to keep far enough ahead of the heat and still hold onto the team. He could not hold them any longer, and he lay down in a furrow. It passed over him quickly, and he had only his ears blistered and his hair singed. The team came within one hundred yards of the barn and then turned and ran into the flames. I had no idea that my husband would come back alive, but just as the fire was reaching the barn roof, he came running and succeeded in getting the stock out of the barn. The chickens all burned to death. All of the fuel on the prairie burned. A stack of cane, left there for over a year, made it okay. That was all that we had until we could do better. We made a crop within a year, and soon, we were back to being alright."

After all of their troubles, they had plenty of excellent wheat crops. So much of it could be stored, and soon the farmers began to make granaries and build elevators. Even then, they had to pile a "great lot" on the ground. After the years of plenty, came the years of drought. From the year 1931 until 1936, they had inferior crops because of the drought, along with the dust storms. On September 29, in 1936, it was raining, and the prospects for a good wheat crop in 1937 looked very good.

Additional Information

ELIZABETH CLEMENTINE (LYMAN) BETHEL

ELIZABETH CLEMENTINE LYMAN, daughter of John Lyman (1834-1906) and Permelia A. Pyland (1835-1905) was born on 12 Feb 1858 in Dade County, Missouri. She married VIRGINIUS L. BETHEL in 1877. They left Missouri for Haskell County, Kansas in 1885. Virginius was the Haskell County Clerk for several years. He passed away in July of 1932 at Sublette, Haskell County, Kansas. Elizabeth Bethel died there on 25 Aug 1946. They were buried in Sublette, at the Haskell County Cemetery.

Virginius and Elizabeth had eight children:

MARY "LILLIAN" BETHEL was born on 10 Feb 1878 in Dadeville, Dade County, Missouri. During her early childhood, her parents moved the family to Haskell County, Kansas. On 20 Nov 1898, she married Robert E. Lee Davis in Santa Fe, Kansas. Robert was the son of Reuben Davis and Elizabeth Anne Struman. He was born on 17 Mar 1875 in Illinois. They had eight children: Gladys Myrtle Davis, Ralph F. Davis, Raymond R. Davis, Thelma Elizabeth Davis, Dale Davis, Jewel Davis, Donald R. Davis, and Vivian Davis. In about 1913, Robert and Lillian moved the family to Dodge City, Ford County, Kansas. Lillian died on 19 Feb 1923 and Robert passed away on 2 Aug 1951. Both buried at the Haskell County Cemetery in Sublette.

JOHN WILLIAM RUSSELL BETHEL was born on 17 Jan 1880 in Dade County, Missouri. He married Estella Davis, daughter of Jacob Davis and Mary Hoover, on 25 Feb 1898 in Santa Fe, Haskell County, Kansas. Estella was born on 3 Apr 1881 in Cowley County, Kansas. They lived in Haskell County until about 1935, when they moved to Delaware County, Oklahoma. John William Russell Bethel died in January of 1944. Estella passed away in April of 1950 in Zena, Delaware County, Oklahoma. Burial for both was at the Valley View Cemetery in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas. They had twelve children: Leonard Virginius Bethel, Robert Lyman Bethel, Pearl L. Bethel, Earl Ross "Roscoe" Bethel, Frederick Russell Bethel, Helen Bethel, Mable Bethel, Harry Thomas Bethel, Julian Jacob Bethel, Margie Bethel, Hazel Wilma Bethel, and Dorothy "Doris" Bethel.

MAMIE ELLIS BETHEL was born on 29 Nov 1881 in Dade County, Missouri. She was first married to Samuel L. Newby (1872-1904) on 6 Jan 1901 in Gray County, Kansas. They lived on a ranch, 7 miles south of Lockport Township, Haskell County, Kansas and had one daughter, Emma Mae Newby. After Samuel passed away, Mamie married Joseph Terenan Miller, son of James Carlton Miller and Cordelia Catherine Swartzel, on 22 Jan 1911 at Santa Fe, Haskell County, Kansas. Joseph was born on 22 Aug 1874 in Ohio. They had two sons: Ellis Miller who

lived in Ephrata, Grant County, Washington and Karlton Miller of Apple Valley, San Bernardino County, California. Joseph passed away on 11 Feb 1956 in Colorado Springs, El Paso County, Colorado. Mamie died on 26 Feb 1971 in Englewood, Arapahoe County, Colorado. . Burial for both was at the Fairview Cemetery in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

LYMAN VIRGINIUS BETHEL was born on 22 Jan 1884 in Morgan, Dade County, Missouri. Sometime after 1921, he was married to Mamie Bell (Craig) Stanard, daughter of Samuel A. Craig and Addie E. Purcell. Mamie was born on 30 Jun 1885 in Marion County, Iowa. She was first married to Royal William "Roy" Stanard (1884-1921) in about 1903. They had seven children. Lyman and Mamie lived in Sublette, Haskell County, Kansas, where Lyman was working as a mail carrier in 1930. In 1940, he worked as a caretaker for the Haskell County cemetery. Lyman passed away on 25 Sep 1947 and Mamie died on 23 Jul 1977, at the age of 92 years. They both passed away in Sublette, Kansas. Burial for both was at the Haskell County Cemetery in Sublette.

LEROY BETHEL was born on 10 Sep 1889 in Santa Fe, Haskell County, Kansas. He married Effie Eudora McCabe, daughter of William Aderly McCabe (1861-1936) and Nancy Alice Ring (1857-1954) on 28 Jun 1918 in Spokane County, Washington. Effie was born on 25 Oct 1889 in Smith Township, Belmont County, Ohio. In 1920, LeRoy and Effie were living in Whitefish, Flathead County, Montana. In 1930, they had moved to Belton, Flathead County, Montana. LeRoy worked for the Railroad in Montana, as a Fireman and a Locomotive Engineer. LeRoy passed away on 23 Sep 1954 and Effie died on 19 May 1986, both in Flathead County, Montana. Both buried at the Whitefish Cemetery in Whitefish, Montana.

FRED BETHEL was born in Haskell County, Kansas, on 19 Nov 1892. In 1918, he enlisted in the United States Army and returned to his home in Sublette, Haskell County, Kansas in early 1919. He married Lucile Rutledge, daughter of John Franklin Rutledge (1853-1931) and Lucile Bertram Hoxie (1868-1930), on 10 Aug 1919 in Sublette, Kansas. Lucille was born on 10 Aug 1897 in Columbus, Adams County, Illinois. Two children were born in their marriage: Winifred June (Bethel) Weeks (1923-2000) and Fred "Eldon" Bethel (1925-1986). In 1925, they moved into a lovely home in Sublette that Fred had built for the family. On 4 Sep 1927, Fred became very ill due to his appendix rupturing and he had to have surgery at the St. Catherine Hospital in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas. There, four days later on 8 Sep 1927, he passed away. Lucile worked as a bookkeeper for a number of years and then she became the Register of Deeds for Haskell County, starting in 1931. She held the job for 32 years. Lucile died on 9 Oct 1992 in Lamar, Prowers County, Colorado. Burial for Fred and Lucille was at the Haskell County Cemetery in Sublette, Kansas.

LORA "MABEL" BETHEL was born on 29 Jan 1895 in Santa Fe, Haskell County, Kansas. She was married to Henry LeRoy "Roy" Wohlgehausen, son of Friedrich Thomas Wohlgehausen and Anna Wall on 18 Aug 1915 at the Finney County, Kansas Court House in Garden City. Roy was

born on 18 Nov 1886 in Stafford, Stafford County, Kansas. He passed away on 11 Aug 1970 in Denver, Denver County, Colorado and Lora died on 25 Sep 1987 in Englewood, Arapahoe County, Colorado. Burial was at the Fairview Cemetery in Colorado Springs, El Paso County, Colorado. Lora and Roy had six children: Marjorie Wohlgehagen, Verne LeRoy Wohlgehagen, Elizabeth Ann "Betty" Wohlgehagen, Leah Ruth Wohlgehagen, Jewelle Wohlgehagen, and Reva May Wohlgehagen.

ROBERT "LEON" BETHEL was born on 2 Nov 1897 in Haskell County, Kansas. He was married to Lena Elizabeth Lindeman, daughter of Fredrick Lewis Lindeman and Agnes Elizabeth Askew, in Santa Fe, Haskell County, Kansas. Lena was born on 31 Dec 1898 in Stafford County, Kansas.

They made their home in Sublette, Haskell County, Kansas and had the following children: V. L. Bethel, Wendell Bethel, Edward Bethel, Lewis Bethel and Agnes (Bethel) Jones. Later in life, Leon and Lena moved to Garden City, Finney County, Kansas. They both died there. Lena passed away on 13 Feb 1981 and Leon died there on 13 Mar 1983. Burial for both was at the Haskell County Cemetery in Sublette.

Cemetery Headstone

VIRGINIUS L. BETHEL & ELIZABETH C. (LYMAN) BETHEL



HASKELL COUNTY CEMETERY

Sublette, Haskell County, Kansas

Headstone photographs provided by Leon Barton