

## **RALPH BALDWIN STAPLETON**

Haskell County, Kansas

Written by Eva Mae Cooper

*Told by Ralph B. Stapleton*



**RALPH BALDWIN & MYRTLE (DAWSON) STAPLETON**

*Married in 1910*

“I came to western Kansas from Morrill, Nebraska (*in Scotts Bluff County*) twenty-three years ago by the covered wagon route. The first winter, we lived at Fowler (*Meade County, Kansas*). I worked as a laborer receiving three dollars a week, which I was glad to get to support my family.

After two years at Fowler, we rented a place five miles south of my present home and undertook growing wheat, but I was handicapped due to lack of money and equipment. Then, there followed three years of real hardship for our family. Unusually severe droughts resulted in crop failure, but year after year, we struggled onward. Mrs. Stapleton took a hand in the field, herding cattle or doing housework for other people.

Sometimes we thought we could not stand it any longer. Then we would decide to try one more crop. To top off the years of bad weather and drought, the insects came and cleaned out everything.

After years of consecutive failures, we were faint-hearted men and women. Some were sad, broken, and driven from the prairie forever. Although we had given lots, we intended to get something back, and so we stayed on. Once we planted the crops, it

was necessary to work the horses only part-time, as they needed time to nibble on the grass part of the day, which was their only feed. Then the crops began to produce, due to frequent rains. The crisis had passed, and the prairie had won.

We lived for eight years on the rented farm, and then we bought and moved to where we now live.

There are five children in our family; Frances, now Mrs. Ray Trahern, who lives five miles northeast of our home place; Fern, now Mrs. Bud Axton of Ventura, California; Harold, Dorothy, and Clifford.

I sincerely believe that Haskell County is the place to go to get a good start. I do not think there is a place any better than this.

In 1930, the home place was in wheat, and it made one thousand and fifty bushels in all. A flock of Leghorn hens and Jersey cows added to the family income. One year I sold one hundred and eighty-six dollars' worth of turkeys, but after 1931, some turkeys were stolen. There were no horses on the place, but we kept a lot of machinery. I do not know how we got along before the use of machinery came into the country.

The house we built ten years ago was strictly modern. The trees around the house are cottonwoods, which I dug from the Cimarron River banks and transplanted to our yard nine years ago. Regardless of the belief that trees have a struggle to live in western Kansas, these trees have made remarkable growth, and each one we planted has lived. Mrs. Stapleton is very busy in the spring and summer planting shrubs and bulbs around the place.

We have many outbuildings on our farm built lately, consisting of a fine barn, chicken house, a milk house, and other small buildings. My brother-in-law, William Dawson, came from Pueblo, Colorado, and staked on some of our land.

Seventeen years ago, the old covered wagons creaked slowly across the plains, carrying a load of weary home seekers. Today, the big sedan skims over the highway, carrying that same family, now fully convinced that it is both a privilege and a pleasure to call Haskell County home."

#### Additional Information RALPH BALDWIN STAPLETON

RALPH BALDWIN STAPLETON, son of George Thomas Stapleton (1866-1935) and Ida Delph Baldwin (1869-1930), was born on 7 Mar 1893 in Barry County, Missouri. He married MYRTLE CECIL DAWSON, daughter of George William Dawson (1856-1912) and Mary E. Roll (1862-1932), on 20 Jan 1910 in Pueblo, Pueblo County, Colorado. Myrtle was only 16 years old at the time. She was born on 12 Jun 1894 in Centertown, Cole County, Missouri.

In about 1913, Ralph and Myrtle were living in Fowler, Meade County, Kansas, and by 1915, they had moved to Seward County, Kansas. Between 1925 and 1930, they moved again, making Haskell County, Kansas their home.

Myrtle passed away on 19 Jan 1975 at her home in Sublette, Kansas. Ralph died on 11 Mar 1982 at a nursing home in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas. Burial was at the Banner Cemetery in Seward County, Kansas.

Five children were born in their marriage: **FRANCES (STAPLETON) TRAHERN** (1910-2005), **FERN MYRTLE (STAPLETON) AXTON** (1912-1983), **HAROLD DAWSON STAPLETON** (1914-1975), **DOROTHY V. (STAPLETON) LYNCH** (1920-2017), and **CLIFFORD EUGENE STAPLETON** (1923-2001).