

LAKIN

Kearny County, Kansas

This information is actually a combination of two stories written by Jennie Rose O'Loughlin and Carrie Davies. The stories were originally published in the 1931 Kearny County Prairie Breeze yearbook. In 1936, RUTH AUSBUN combined them for the Federal Writers Project.

Thanks to Julie Grubbs McCombs at the Kearny County, Kansas Historical Society for her help and support!

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

A traveler motoring at a great speed thru western Kansas today and grumbling over what he terms inconveniences little realize what the first traveler had to "contend with".

On 1 Apr 1927, an observer stationed along the Santa Fe Trail reported the passage of 200 motor cars. Half a century earlier, had he been stationed in the same place, he would have experienced the passage of prairie schooners whose wheels and the oxen's sharp feet cut the trail thru the new country to the settlement of the Southwest. The occupants of those schooners came, not merely for the ride, but with a determination to conquer the sod and build homes for themselves in the west. They knew, too, the courage, perseverance, and tenacity they would have to exercise on the frontier to brave the discomforts occasioned by Indian raids, blizzards, prairie fires, hot winds, droughts, and grasshoppers. Though some of the people returned to the East, many remained, keeping their faith with a country that seemed at times to deny them a bare living.

Not only the pioneers but everyone who passed over the Santa Fe Trail in the early days stopped at what must have seemed the last chance to buy supplies. This stopping place was the first building in Lakin, a dugout, which gazed complacently upon the march of time and, no doubt could have told thrilling tales of the days when civilization came to conquer.

J. B. Edwards was the first person to erect a building on top of the ground in Lakin and reside there. The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad had just laid its track to where Lakin is now and laid a sidetrack and erected a water tank there. They had also put down a track called a "Y" to turn their locomotives and avoid returning backward. They did this because great herds of buffalo had caused several locomotives to be ditched when returning from the end of the track with empty cars that had dumped material for construction purposes.

About 4 o'clock a.m., on 4 Dec 1872, a car of lumber and merchandise shipped from Dodge City was switched on the sidetrack at the then called siding of Lakin, Kansas.

In the car was George O. Smith, who has long since been deceased. When they arrived, there were two good-sized dugouts, one for a cook's quarters and one was a sleeping quarter for 24 men who had been assigned the work of ballasting the track. Under the act of Congress, the road had to be finished, and duly accepted by the government by the first day of January 1873.

There was not any large trade selling merchandise, but they did buy and ship from there, a carload of buffalo hides. Early in January of 1873, they again shipped on to the state line town of Sargent, Colorado, which is now extinct. They remained there until June of 1873 when they learned the road would build no more that season except ten or twelve miles west of the state line. Mr. Edwards sold out and returned to Abilene, Kansas, where he has since resided.

On 17 Nov 1878, Mrs. Carrie Davies* (*She was actually Mrs. Carrie Philips at that time. She was divorced about four years later and became Mrs. Carrie Davies.*) arrived with her two little children, Tillie and Lewis, from Chicago on an early mountain train. It was the most beautiful morning, and the sun was shining with all its beauty to welcome them. Her husband, having preceded her several months before, accompanied her into the dining room for breakfast.

After breakfast, they were to view the sights of the town, and the first place that any newcomer was taken to view was what the citizens call "The White House." The house was owned by Mr. Alonzo Bradner Boylan, who was at that time an agent for the A. T. and S. F. Railroad. From there, they were escorted to the general store, owned by Mr. John O'Loughlin, and it certainly was a general store, for they handled nearly everything that anyone could want. Still, it was a strange-looking store to her, for it was a little place about 16 by 20 feet straight down into the ground. Those who were with her informed her that it was a dugout.

The section house was their next place to visit. Owned by the railroad, it housed their section gang. It was not unusual for gangs of men to be in the little town since the railroad was practically a new one and a vast amount of work was necessary to make it what we now see.

The last place to visit was the little depot, where Mr. Boylan was an employer and where all the company's work was transacted. This made up the entire town of Lakin, except for a few small dugouts.

The railroad eating house (*the Harvey House*), where Mrs. Carrie Davies was to make her home, was managed by Mr. Fisher and his helpers, a clerk, two cooks, a yardman, and four girls. There were no dining cars allowed at this time on the railroad, and it was the work of this hotel to prepare the necessary meals for all the passengers. Of course, the train service was minimal, since they had but two trains a day, one from the east and the other from the west. The train conductors from the west were David

Scott and Jack Schott, and from the east were Jack Bender and two others by the name of Sill and Morgan. These old conductors were on the road for many years.

One day a Mr. Roland Walter, the brother of Mrs. Boylan, furnished horses and saddles and then escorted Mrs. Carrie Davies and a friend of his, Gertie Turpin, for a horseback ride. As they rode over the prairie, Carrie Davies thought that it was the most beautiful country that she had ever seen. In a few days, she saw antelope in great herds, as well as buffalo and wild horses, passing the hotel on their way to the river for water.

After Mrs. Davies had been in Lakin a couple of weeks, her friends were kind enough to have the Pueblo Band present a musical dance for her. To have a crowd in those days, their friends had to come from as far west as Pueblo and as far east as Kinsley.

Of course, every town back then needed a newspaper, so Mr. Deal and Mr. Taylor came as editors and started the first paper called "The Lakin Eagle." Later, this same paper was bought and operated by Mr. Joseph "Joe" Dillon*.

To show how sparsely the country was settled, there were four children at first; Lena Boylan, who is now Mrs. George Henry Tate, and her brother Brad (*Ambrose Bradner Boylan, Jr.*), plus the two children of Mrs. Carrie Davies, plus Mrs. Tillie E. Copeland and Lewis W. Davies of College View, Nebraska.

There cannot be given much history of the county without a little romance. The whole town was in excitement over what was to be the first wedding. Miss Margaret (*Maggie*) White was to be married to Mr. Thomas J. Pearl. A home wedding was out of the question in those days. They had to go to Pueblo or Dodge City for a license and for someone to give the wedding vows. This couple chose Pueblo, and, of course, there had to be a chaperon, so Mrs. Roberts was selected to go with the bridal party. After they were married, they came back and made the little town of Lakin their home. Their oldest child, Maude, was the first child to be born in Lakin and was the second girl born in the county. The first child born was from the Birch family, but it died at five months. Alice Carter, now Mrs. Davis Bates, daughter of John Carter, who located just east of Hartland, was the first girl born in the county. About this same time, the Dillon family with four children moved to Lakin. One of their daughters is now the wife of Mr. Harry Browne. Then, Mr. Gray started the second store. Next came Mr. Frank Pierce with his family, starting a claim just west of town. Harry Browne, from the East, arrived about this time and chose Lakin as his future home. It was easy to see that he is satisfied with his choice by how he has stuck to living in Lakin through the ups and downs. Harry was always a friend and advisor. Many say he was more like a father of the town than one of the brothers. Mrs. Virginia P. Hicks has the honor of being the third baby girl born in the county, and Mrs. Carrie Davies was the "primary doctor" at the time of her birth.

One of Mrs. Carrie Davies's first experiences after coming to the hotel was to wait on several Indians and their interpreter. The Ute Indians had gone on the warpath and killed the Indian agent, so the government authorities took thirty of them to Washington and, of course, stopped at the eating house as they were going through. Before leaving the hotel's history, I would like to explain a question often asked about the elm trees that stand just north of the coal chute. For many years these elm trees stood out as the only trees in Lakin, and they marked the front yard of the old eating house.

All work and no play make Jack a dull boy, so it was decided that the early settlers should have a picnic on the Fourth of July. The hotel offered to donate all cakes and sandwiches, and that was a big start toward the success of a good time. They had everything provided, and the program was arranged, when to their amazement, Mr. Charles Chapman announced that they could not have a picnic without a flag. No one could find a way to buy one, but Mr. Chapman was determined not to be outdone and said he would furnish the cloth if someone would do the sewing. Mrs. Dora Browne, Mrs. Frank Pierce, and Mrs. Carrie Davies volunteered to do the work. They had to cut the stars and sew them on each side, plus it had to be a large flag as it represented a large number of people in a large place.

Everything was ready, and they started on the morning of the Fourth for the area south of the river, which they named that day the Canters Grove. It still bears that name. Of course, they did not have automobiles in those days, but they loaded into their wagons while others rode horseback and all started for Canters Grove.

Mr. Chapman was voted as flag bearer, and Richard "Dick" Joyce was to assist him. The flag was not to drag the ground or get wet as they crossed the river. They were getting along nicely until they were in the middle of the river. The river in those days was not as it is now. It was a river without any ditches like today that help keep the water low. And at that time it was flowing very high from bank to bank. When they reached the middle, they thought they were getting along nicely, when for some reason, Mr. Chapman's horse went clear under, and gallant Mr. Joyce had to rescue the flag and let Mr. Chapman get out as best he could, all soaked and wet. Through it all, they spent a fine day at the luncheon and heard the usual patriotic speeches.

They returned in the afternoon in plenty of time to get ready for the big ball that the manager of the hotel, Mr. Fisher, provided in the big dining room. Again the music was furnished by the Pueblo band. Everyone danced until the wee hours of the morning, for they were all relatively young then. They thought they should bring out the flag and have it saluted during the event, but to their dismay, the flag could not be found. Years later, Mr. Frank Fisher said that the last he had heard, the flag was in Chicago, where it was being kept as a historical artifact.

Additional Information

CAROLINE "CARRIE" (ROSE) PHILLIPS DAVIES

The name Phillips is sometimes spelled "Philips"



About 1897

*Photograph provided by Julie Grubbs McCombs, Director of the
Kearny County Historical Society/Museum*

CAROLINE "CARRIE" E. ROSE, daughter of John Crockett Rose and Julianna Cooper, was born on 7 Mar 1855 in Randolph County, West Virginia. There are conflicting records for her birth place. *(Her obituary gives Potts Creek, Alleghany County, Virginia.)*

Carrie married SAMUEL L. PHILLIPS (1850-1914) on 21 Nov 1872 at the North Presbyterian Church in New York, New York. *(Carrie may have briefly lived in Illinois and Pennsylvania. Some records indicate her first two children were born in Pennsylvania.)*

In 1878, Carrie and Samuel moved to Kearny County, Kansas. They were divorced on 7 Feb 1882 in Dodge City, Ford County, Kansas. Samuel left for Colorado.

Carrie and Samuel had three children:

MATILDA E. "TILLIE" PHILLIPS was born on 6 Sep 1873. She married Henry Lazarus Copeland, son of Edwin G. Copeland (1831-1906) and Sarah A. Pearson (1838-1910), on 18 Jun 1905 in Lamar, Prowers County, Colorado. Henry was born on 7 Jul 1872 in Wayne County, North Carolina. He passed away on 29 Jan 1969 in Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska. Tillie died there on 11 Feb 1970. Burial for both was at the College View Cemetery in Lincoln.

LEWIS WILLIAM PHILLIPS (DAVIES) (*Lewis took the last name of his stepfather, Davies*), was born 23 Jan 1876 in Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania. He married Lillian E. Hiner on 9 Dec 1906 in Lamar, Prowers County, Colorado. They had two children: Frances Sylvesta (Davies) Madison (1908-2003) and Mauveth Lucille (Davies) Kuehl (1912-1997). Lewis passed away on 25 Mar 1981 in Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska, at the age of 105. Burial was at the College View Cemetery in Lincoln.

HENRY L. PHILLIPS was born on 4 Jun 1881 and died 3 Oct 1881. He was buried at the Lakin Cemetery in Lakin, Kearny County, Kansas.

After Carrie's divorce from Samuel Phillips, she married **WARREN SYLVESTER DAVIES** in 1882. He was born on 16 Apr 1848 in Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky. Warren worked as a stockman, rancher, and cattleman. Because he engaged in capturing wild horses, he became known as "Wild Horse Davies". His stepchildren, Tillie and Lewis, took his last name, so a few records give him as their father.

Carrie and Warren lived in Lakin, Kansas until about 1910 when they moved to Lamar, Colorado. They were still living there in 1920. Carrie worked as the proprietor of a local hotel. By 1921, they left Colorado and moved to Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska.

Warren passed away on 2 May 1934 in Lincoln, Nebraska. When Carrie was 95 years old, she was living with her son, Lewis, and his wife, Lillian, in Lincoln. Carrie died there on 21 Jan 1953. Burial for Warren and Carrie was at the College View Cemetery in Lincoln, Nebraska.

NEWSPAPER OBITUARIES

CAROLINE "CARRIE" (ROSE) PHILLIPS DAVIES

The Lincoln, Nebraska Star – Wednesday, 21 Jan 1953

Mrs. Carrie E. Davies, 97, of 3843 South 48th, a Lincoln resident for 32 years, died Wednesday. Mrs. Davies was born (*in 1855*) at Potts Creek, Virginia, and grew up in Sweet Springs, Virginia.

After living in New York for a time, she moved to Lakin, Kansas, in 1878, where she was associated with the Harvey Houses Restaurant chain, with her husband, Warren S. Davies, who died in 1934. Mrs. Davies moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1921.

Mrs. Davies was a member of the College View Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Funeral will be at 2 p.m. on Friday at the College View Seventh-day Adventist Church, with Elder M. W. Deming officiating. Burial will be at the College View Cemetery in Lincoln.

Surviving is a daughter, Mrs. Tille E. Copeland of Lincoln; a son, Lewis of Lincoln; two granddaughters and four great-granddaughters.

HENRY S. PHILLIPS

Son of Samuel L. Phillips and Carrie E. (Rose) Phillips Davies

*Thanks to Julie Grubbs McCombs, Director of the KCHS Museum, for providing the following obituary
From the book... "Diggin' Up Bones" by Betty Barnes - Part II, Page 585*

HENRY PHILLIPS, son of Samuel L. and Carrie E. (Rose) Phillips, was born on 4 Jun 1881 and died 3 Oct 1881 (*in Lakin, Kansas*). His father, Samuel L. Phillips was a Harvey House Chef, and his mother, Carrie E. was a Harvey House Waitress. Samuel L. Phillips was also the Justice of Peace in 1879 in Lakin Township, Ford County, Kansas.

Cemetery Headstone HENRY S. PHILLIPS



LAKIN CEMETERY
Lakin, Kearny County, Kansas
Headstone photograph provided by Leon Barton

MATILDA E. "TILLIE" (PHILLIPS) COPELAND
Daughter of Samuel L. Phillips and Carrie E. (Rose) Phillips Davies

Lincoln Journal Star, Thursday, 12 Feb 1970

COPELAND – Tillie E., 96, died on Wednesday. She was the former County Superintendent of Schools in Kearny County, Kansas. Resident of Lincoln (*Nebraska*) for 48 years. She was a member of the College View Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Survivors: brother, Lewis W. Davies of Lincoln; nieces, Mrs. Mauveth Kuehl of Lincoln, Mrs. Sylvesta Madison of Lisbon, Ohio.

Services will be at 3 p.m. on Friday at the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 49th & Prescott, with Elder T. W. Morgan. Burial will be at the College View Cemetery. Pallbearers will be Ray Allison, Jim Gearhart, John Lanz, John Fulk, Wendell Carpenter & Woodrow Morley.

LEWIS WILLIAM PHILLIPS DAVIES
Son of Samuel L. Phillips and Carrie E. (Rose) Phillips Davies

Omaha (Nebraska) World Herald - Friday, 27 Mar 1981

LEWIS DAVIES, 105, dies; Bible Lover

Lincoln – Lewis Davies of Lincoln, who once joked that they invented the telephone during the year of his birth to spread the news of his arrival, died Wednesday at the age of 105.

Davies, born in Philadelphia on 23 Jan 1876, was a Seventh-day Adventist and lived at the Tabitha Home. He began a lifelong Bible reading marathon when he was 18, and by January 1971, he had read the entire Bible 51 times and the New Testament 91 times. Newspaper files indicated Davies once recalled hunting buffalo and wild horses in the Texas Panhandle. A nickname he acquired during his buffalo and horse-hunting days followed him when he moved to Lincoln in the early 1920s. He recalled receiving mail addressed simply to "Wild Horse Davies, Lincoln".

Surviving are his daughters: Mauveth Kuehl of Lincoln, and Sylvesta Madison of Boulder, Colorado.

WARREN S. DAVIES (1842-1934)
Second Husband of Carrie E. (Rose) Phillips Davies

The Lincoln, Nebraska Star – Wednesday, 2 May 1934

WARREN S. DAVIES DIES; WAS PIONEER RANCHER

Warren S. Davies, 86, who had followed the frontier for many years, died Wednesday morning at 5:45 following an illness of a week. He had lived in Lincoln for 12 years. For many years before his retirement, he was a rancher and cattleman in western Kansas.

He is survived by his wife, Carrie; a daughter, Mrs. Tillie E. Copeland; a son, Lewis W. Davies; all of Lincoln; and two granddaughters, Sylvasta Davies of Lincoln and Mrs. William Kuehl of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The body is at Castle, Roper & Matthews. (*Burial at College View Cemetery in Lincoln, Nebraska.*)

**Additional Information
JOSEPH "JOE" DILLON**



JOSEPH DILLON

*Photograph is from the Family Photo Collection of Charles H. and Edna Browne.
Many thanks to Cindy Browne for providing photograph and adding details about Joseph Dillon.*

JOSEPH DILLON, son of Charles and Eliza Dillon, was born about 1838, in County Galway, Ireland. (*His headstone reads 1831.*) In 1855, and at the age of 17 years, he was living with his widowed mother, Eliza, in New York City.

In 1858, Joseph married **ELIZA HALLIGAN**. Eliza was also born in Ireland, in 1840. In 1860 and 1870, they continued to live in New York City where Joseph worked as a grocer. Three children were born to their marriage: **ANNIE E. DILLON** (*born about 1864*), **MARIA LOUISE DILLON** (*1866-1949*) (*Maria Louise married David Harold Browne in 1886*), and **CHARLES J. DILLON** (*1869-1942*).

(Charles J. Dillon graduated from Lakin High and went on to become a nationally known journalist of the Kansas City Star, traveling with and covering nine US presidents and later teaching at Kansas State Agricultural College in Manhattan.)

Eliza (Halligan) Dillon passed away on 5 Jan 1871 in New York.

Joseph left New York for Huron, Michigan in March of 1879. In May of that year, he married his second wife, ALICE E. JARVIS. Alice was born in Canada, in 1850.

After learning that the Southwest parts of Kansas were warm and dry, he left Michigan quickly and acquired a homestead three miles north of Lakin in Kearny County. The family arrived there on 1 May 1879. When he first arrived, Joseph worked as a travelling agent for a Wholesale Hardware Store, but he soon established himself as owner and editor of the Lakin Herald Newspaper. It was the first newspaper in Kansas, west of Dodge City. *(His daughter, Maria Louise served as typesetter and printer for her father on the Lakin Herald.)* Joseph later founded the Garden City Irrigator Newspaper in Garden City, Kansas. He planted the first two trees on Main Street in Garden City. They were Cottonwood trees that remained there for many years.

Joseph and Alice had five children: LENA ALICE DILLON (1876-1964), MABEL C. DILLON (1879-), ROBERT J. DILLON (1881-), BARTLEY DILLON (*died at birth*), & MAYME DILLON.

Alice (Jarvis) Dillon died in about 1890.

In 1893, widowed Joseph married AMANDA "DOLLY" PICKETT. She was born on 15 Mar 1868 in Jasper Township, Ralls County, Missouri. Joseph and Dolly lived a short time in Lawrence, Kansas, but by the year 1900, they were living in Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas. To their marriage were born five children: LUCILLE DILLON (1894-1900), MYRA DILLON (1895-1986), (*twins*) JOSEPH DILLON (1895-1918), KATHLEEN M. DILLON (1900-2000), and ELEANOR DILLON (1906-).

Joseph died on 20 Oct 1907 in Kansas City, Kansas. Dolly passed away on 10 Mar 1912 in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. Burial was at the Woodlawn Cemetery in Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas.

Newspaper Obituary JOSEPH DILLON

Lawrence, Kansas Daily Journal - Monday, 21 Oct 1907

FAMOUS OLD KANSAS NEWSPAPER MAN GONE

Joseph Dillon died in Kansas City last week after an illness of one year, at the age of 70 years. Mr. Dillon published the Herald a Lakin, Kansas in 1879, the first newspaper in that state west of Dodge City, and later founded the Garden City Irrigator. For ten years, he had charge of the circulation of the old Kansas City Times.

In 1894, Mr. Dillon was defeated on the Democratic ticket for auditor in Kansas and in 1900 refused the same nomination from the fusion party. Mr. Dillon left a widow and eight children. C. J. Dillon, of the Kansas City Star, is a son.

Mr. Dillon is well known among Western Kansas's old-timers, having lived in that part of the state when many of the counties were in their formation period. He participated in the troubles incident to the location of county seats. He arrived in Lakin in the early part of 1879 and made that his home for several years. Afterward, he moved to Sequoyah in Finney County and started a newspaper in Garden City.

His paper represented the Democratic interest in that part of the state, and he was one time a candidate against Buffalo Jones for a seat in the Kansas legislature. He belonged to the old school of politicians in western Kansas, Col. A. H. Burtis of Garden City being about the only surviving member actively engaged in the same profession in that area. He was unsuccessful politically in the western portion of the state, moving to Kansas City prior to the boom in that area. Since that time, he has been engaged in literary work in various capacities. There are numerous stories told by the old-timers in Garden City of the political position of Joe Dillon to whom Buffalo Jones always charged his defeat for the legislature when he made his campaign against H. P. Myton.

When Finney County was divided and Kearney County sliced off from the west, a new county seat was made possible, and it has been said that it was Dillon who was largely responsible for the site of Lakin being chosen.

Joe Dillon was a familiar figure for years in the state politically, always unsuccessful on account of the Republican majority, which was against him. His friends were many regardless of politics.

Joe Dillon was a resident of Lawrence for a short time.