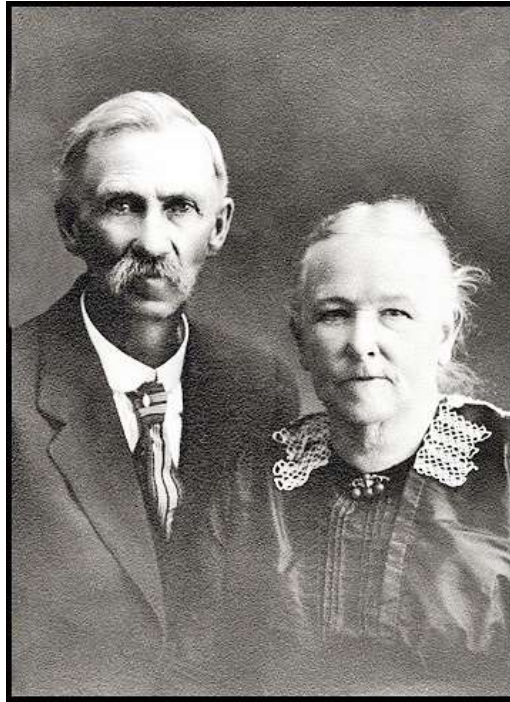


THE LIFE OF HENRY HOWELL

Scott County, Kansas

Written by Madge Clinton

As told by Henry himself



HENRY WARD BEECHER HOWELL & EMMA JANE (WILLIS) HOWELL

Although this story is about Henry Ward Beecher Howell, it begins with telling about his grandfather, William Henry Howell.

In the year of 1792 on January 2, there was a little boy born, the grandfather of Mr. Henry Howell. *(Some records give his grandfather's birth year as 1797.)* William Henry Howell grew up and became a little drummer boy in the war of 1812, yet the regiment that he drilled with, was never called for duty. When this young man was 21 years old, he left North Carolina and moved to Ohio. With him, he carried a powder horn, used in the war, full of apple seeds that he planted. In 1887, a cousin of Mr. Howells pulled up two of these seedlings and planted them in Indiana. They are now bearing fruit.

William Howell was married in Ohio and he took his young bride with him to settle in Indiana. He located on the claim in Grant County, where now the city of Marion stands. When they wanted his claim for that city, he sold it to the city and located on another claim four miles south of Marion, Indiana. Here he reared his family of eleven children. This claim, when he first settled on it, was in the heart of the woods. In

August, he would go around through the woods, girdling the trees. This was the process he used in killing the trees... the way he accomplished this was by taking a sharp axe and cutting into the sap, then leaving them until the fall of the year. During the winter, he would cut these trees out, thus making a small field, sometimes as small as three and four acres. He had one field that contained eleven acres. Everybody for miles around called it "Howells big field".

It was on this claim that William Howell reared his family. He then divided it among his boys. It was on this claim that Thomas Howell was born. He was the third child of the eleven children. There, they built two houses. One still stands today. Thomas Howell grew up on this claim and took a wife. It was on this same claim that Henry (*Henry Ward Beecher Howell*) was born on the 27th day of August in 1854.

In October of 1855, when Henry was fourteen months old, his mother and father moved them to Iowa. They made the trip with an oxen team and a covered wagon. It took them six weeks to travel that distance. They settled in Dallas County on a farm and moved into a log house. Later in the spring and summer, they built another house and this began their farm. This farm was located three miles northwest of the present town of Redfield. The nearest post office was at Irish Town, later named Wiscotta. They remained on this farm for two years. In 1857, they returned to Indiana for a visit, expecting just to stay through the winter, but while they were there, they lost one of their horses and were unable to make the return trip to Iowa.

When they discovered they could not make the return trip to Iowa, they traded their farm in Iowa for a mill in Marion, Indiana. His father ran the mill until the war broke out. Then he joined the army and went to war. He remained in the army until February in 1865. Henry's father returned from the war broken down. He could not even help himself. Therefore, all the responsibility fell upon Henry and his mother.

In the fall of October 1865, he moved his parents back to Iowa. There they purchased another farm that was located five miles west of the farm they owned before they went back to Indiana. This farm was located in Guthrie County. In the spring, the farm work was all for Henry to do. He knew it had to be done, so he in earnest, he fell right into it.

He had to break out sod in order to have a field to plant. The sod breaking was not a very easy job as the sod in Iowa is much heavier than it is in Kansas. All the farm implements that they owned in those days were a double shovel plow and a rod-breaking plow.

When Henry wasn't working, he was shooting, mostly at ground squirrels. He did this until he was almost a perfect shot.

Henry's clothes were all homespun. His mother spun wool and flax. In the summer, Henry was dressed in linen while in winter he had wool clothes. He was dressed in

these kinds of garments until after he was sixteen. It became impossible to get flax and wool so they had to buy their clothes at the stores.

Henry was educated in county schools. He went to school until all the books ran out, until it was impossible to get any book they had not studied, and until he knew as much as the teacher did. Most of his teachers were subscription teachers. They would come into the community and go around just like paper men do today asking for subscriptions only they wanted to know how many children each family would send to school and how long they would be there.

After he finished all the schoolwork that was possible, he took up school teaching. He taught two, three-month terms, and one eight-month term. The first year he taught, he had forty pupils, which he taught for twenty-five dollars a month. This school was a county school that was two and one half miles from home. This distance was covered on foot morning and evening. The remark was made that he never received as much money as the teachers do these days. However, he said he gained much more because he got himself a wife, as she was one of his students.

In November of 1878, Henry and one of his uncles made their first trip to Kansas. They started out with a two-horse team and a covered wagon. Henry had fifty dollars in his pockets.

They reached the Missouri (river) and crossed at Plattsmouth, Nebraska on a cable ferry. The ferry was forced across the river by the river current. A wire cable was stretched across the river, and a raft with rails on two sides was attached to it by ropes. When the ferry was going across to the other side the back rope was given slack while the front rope was drawn tight. This letting the current hit the back thus pushing the ferry across. Then, going on until they reached the Republican River, they crossed at Superior, Nebraska. There they stopped at the home of one of his uncle's in Jewell County, Kansas. He said his uncle came to Kansas early enough that he could shoot buffalo in his own dooryard. This was close to the Big Spirit Springs they now call the Waconda Springs in Mitchell County.

Continuing on west to Stockton, Henry and his uncle camped with frontier settlers who were driven by Dull Knife and his followers. (*Dull Knife was a Northern Cheyenne Native American Chief.*)

Then continuing down the south fork of the Solomon River to a town called Nicodemus. This town was a Negro town. There were three hundred Negroes and one white man. This white man had a grocery store in a covered wagon. The Negroes were coming from the south to take claims. Then they made dugouts completely under the ground. All one could see was just the stovepipes. There was only one building above the ground, that was the land office and it was made of sod. The land agent was also a Negro, a Philadelphia lawyer and a government employee.

They then continued on south to Wakeeney, Kansas (*Today, Wakeeney is a rural community in Northwest Kansas.*) then to the Smoky Hill River and then to the area where the pyramids now stand. (*The pyramids are actually large chalk formations called "Monument Rocks" in Gove County, Kansas.*) Here they came upon Dull Knives trail again. They camped that night at Hell Creek, (*in Gove County, Kansas*) just south of the pyramids.



MONUMENT ROCKS
Gove County, Kansas
Photograph by Brian W. Schaller

On southwest to the place where the Scott County State Park is now located is a place called Battle Canyon. In this canyon is the place where Colonel Lewis was killed. In addition, the Indians killed their worn out ponies to keep the white men from capturing them. This was about as far south as Dull Knife and his men went. They gave the soldiers a slip and retraced their tracks back into Nebraska where they were captured. Some of the leaders were sent to prison, while the rest were sent to the reservations.

From Hell Creek, they traveled south on a trail that was made by soldiers and Indians to the place of Grigston (*both in Scott County*). Here they camped by the side of a large lagoon that covered about eighty acres. They stayed for three days and shot antelope. The antelope came from miles around to drink. Mr. Howell says that he had seen as many as two thousand antelope in a herd at one time.

From there they traveled on to the Santa Fe Trail to Dodge City. They spent the night there then continued back a little west and on to Cimarron and Pierceville. There was only one house in Cimarron and that was a grocery store. While in Pierceville, there were only two houses... a grocery store and a section house.

On this trip, they had one horse that was raised in the west and could live on buffalo grass while the other horse was a native of Iowa and could not survive on buffalo grass, but had to be fed grain. Their grain was running low, so they decided to

purchase more but could not find any to buy. They asked a man in Cimarron where they could find some and that they were headed to Pueblo. He told them they would not be able to find any grain any closer than Pueblo unless they went back to Dodge City. They decided to turn back and not continue on to Pueblo. By using the same trail, they soon reached the pyramids again. From there they followed two old cattle trails along the Smoky Hill River to Fort Hayes. There, Henry saw a herd of antelope and decided to shoot one. He told his uncle to drive on and not to wait. He lay low to shoot but missed. The shot having frightened the antelope got them to running and they were gone in just a few minutes. He began to run to catch up with his uncle, and after about five miles, he reached the wagon.

They continued on eastward to the Missouri River, which they crossed at Brownville, Nebraska. On Christmas Eve, they reached home, having been on the road for three months. He had not slept in a house except for three nights out of the three months. It reached as low as 20 degrees below zero, but they slept on the ground just the same.

For pass time, they read books and played cards. They would read by the campfire. When both had read the book, they would trade it or spend another nickel at the next station for another book until they found this was "running into money". They then bought them a deck of cards. They each took a side of the wagon and when one of them would win; they would put a notch on their side of the wagon. When they reached home, they had a long string of notches on each side of the wagon.

All during the past three months, Henry had never used a razor. When he reached home, he began shaving a little at a time until by summer he only had sideburns left and a mustache. He shaved his sideburns off but left his mustache, and it remains today. His hair was of an auburn color but now it has turned snow white.

This takes us to the year of 1879. In this year, Henry was married, and for the next two years, he lived on the farm of his fathers in Guthrie County, Iowa. Then he moved to a new town called Linden in Dallas County Iowa. This was just one mile from the farm of his fathers. After moving to Linden, he again built another family home. This brings us up to 1881. Here he took up the work as a carpenter and cabinet worker also doing some undertaking. He also ran a lumberyard and carried a stock of furniture until March 1891. His father took sick and died. He then traded the farm for another stock of goods, which he ran until January 9th in 1907. He then closed out this stock of goods and bought a livery barn that he ran for one year. Then he took up the telephone business that he and family ran. He had five girls and two boys at this time. He did the line work while his wife handled the switchboard and the girls did the housework.

On May 1 in 1914, he left Iowa and came to Shallow Water in Scott County, Kansas. This trip was made by train. When he reached Shallow Water, there was a depot, store, and a few dwelling houses. The depot was located on the main street and just a

little west of the present store, while the small stockyards were south of the main street.

After arriving in Scott County, he built a small house of just two rooms. This house is now one half mile west of Shallow Water and used as a washhouse and smoke house. In June, he brought his wife, two of his girls and one boy to Kansas. One girl and one boy having been married and two girls were teaching school. On the fourth day of July, he and his son George, unloaded lumber to build the church in Shallow Water. Then during the winter, he built his home there that is located one block south of the main street.

This house has eight rooms... three upstairs and five downstairs. In the dining room is a cupboard, made while he was in Iowa, that has three corners and fits into a corner of the room.

Later the building in which the store was located was moved to Scott City, but the stock of goods that was owned by Anson Mark was moved into the small house which Mr. Howell built when he first came here. In addition, the post office was located in the store and managed by Mr. Howell. After the church was finished, they moved the post office to the back room of the church. Another man brought in a stock of groceries and located in the front part of the church. As the town grew, they moved the post office to another building and they did the same with the grocery store. Now, the church is finally a place of worship.

In 1923, a little white dog, named "Don" became part of this family. He would deliver mail to everyone, never getting it dirty. This dog used to be a very faithful old dog but now he is much older and can hardly get around, but he is still in the company of Mr. Howell.

Mr. Howell's wife passed away four years ago. He now rents his home and lives in the two rooms at the side of the post office. Mr. Howell is a very kind older man and liked by all. He is still in good health and very spry. He can out walk either of his sons and it would be safe to say out walk any man above thirty in this county. He said he had never had a doctor even feel his pulse since he had been in Kansas.

Mr. Howell having been in the post office business for almost twenty-four years can still handle the job. His old dog and he live together. All of Mr. Howell's children are still living except one daughter who followed Mrs. Howell.

Additional Information

WILLIAM HENRY HOWELL
Grandfather of Henry Ward Beecher Howell

WILLIAM HENRY HOWELL was born on 2 Jul 1797 in Chatham County, North Carolina. He was the son of Robert A. Howell and Rachel Wilkinson. His parents married on 13 May 1796 in Chatham County, North Carolina.

William married **MARIAH (MARIS) MOORMAN** on 1 Dec 1825 in Randolph County, Indiana. Maris was born on 3 Sep 1807 in Marlboro County, South Carolina. William passed away on 29 Nov 1879 in Madison County, Iowa. Maris died there on 7 May 1881.

THOMAS H. HOWELL

Father of Henry Ward Beecher Howell

THOMAS H. HOWELL, son of William Henry Howell and Maris Moorman, was born on 7 Nov 1829 in Grant County, Indiana. He married **ELIZABETH ALLEN**, daughter of John Allen (1809-1891) and Rachel Newby (1809-1893) on 6 Nov 1853 in Grant County, Indiana. Elizabeth was born on 12 Apr 1835 in Wayne County, Indiana. Thomas passed away on 1 Jul 1891 in Dallas County, Iowa. Elizabeth died on 25 Feb 1924 in Scott County, Kansas. Burial for Thomas and Elizabeth was at the West Linn Cemetery in Linden, Dallas County, Iowa.

HENRY WARD BEECHER HOWELL

HENRY WARD BEECHER HOWELL, son of Thomas H. Howell (1829-1891) and Elizabeth Allen (1835-1924), was born on 27 Aug 1854 in Marion, Grant County, Indiana. He married **EMMA JANE WILLIS**, daughter of John Frank Willis (1817-1909) and Ann Dill (1818-1894) on 5 Oct 1879 in Dallas County, Iowa. Emma Jane (Willis) Howell was born on 2 Mar 1858 in Grant County, Indiana. She passed away on 1 Feb 1933 in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas. Henry died on 7 Jan 1938 in California while visiting one of his daughters. Henry and Emma were both buried at the West Linn Cemetery in Linden, Dallas County, Iowa.

Their children were...

NELLIE MAY HOWELL was born on 9 May 1880 in Dallas County, Iowa. In 1904, she married **FRED FRAZIER**, son of George W. Frazier (1856-1940) and Esther Ann Wiggins (1861-1929) in Dallas County, Iowa. Fred was born in Dallas County on 2 Dec 1878. He died on 11 Feb 1954 and Nellie passed away on 11 Sep 1964. Burial was at the West Linn Cemetery in Linden, Dallas County, Iowa. They had five children: Helen Gladys (Frazier) Ozbun, Howard Allen Frazier, Frances L. (Frazier) Armantrout, Roger Ronald Frazier, and Lois Marian (Frazier) Wickliff.

AGNES LOUELLA HOWELL was born on 29 Jun 1885 in Linden, Dallas County, Iowa. She never married. Agnes was a teacher and a principal of the primary department at the Holcomb, Kansas schools for a number of years. She died on 24 Dec 1933 in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas. Her burial was at the West Linn Cemetery in Linden, Iowa.

WILLIAM CRAY HOWELL was born on 20 Jul 1887 in Linden, Dallas County, Iowa. He married **MINA HARDEN**, daughter of Ezra Maulsby Harden (1853-1932) and Lucy Elizabeth Cronk (1854-1928) on 13 Mar 1907 in Dallas County, Iowa. Mina was born on 1 Nov 1886 in Dallas County, Iowa. She died on 17 Mar 1940 in Los Angeles County, California. Her burial was at the Forest Lawn Park Cemetery in Glendale, Los Angeles County, California. William passed away on 23 Dec 1959 in Havre, Hill County, Montana and buried there at the Highland Cemetery. William and Mina had two children, Gerald Ray Howell (1908-1992) and Vera "Corrine" (Howell) Van Wallinga (1917-1997).

EDNA HOWELL was born on 3 Jan 1890 in Linden, Dallas County, Iowa. She married **CHARLES STEPHEN GOSE**, son of Thomas J. Gose (1858-1920) and Emma Jane Johnson (1859-1935) on 28 Dec 1907. Charles was born on 21 Jan 1885 in Rockwell City, Calhoun County, Iowa. He died on 19 Feb 1970 at Sylmar, Los Angeles County, California. Edna died there on 19 Jan 1978. Edna and Charles had six children: Margaret Elizabeth Gose (1908-1957), Leland Howell Gose (1910-1964), Ruth Marian Gose (1911-2003), Robert Thomas Gose (1914-1976), Charles Henry Gose (1917-1981), and Lola Mae Gose (1930-2020).

ALTA HOWELL was born on 3 Jun 1891 in Linden, Dallas County, Iowa. She married **DAVID "WILFRED" MOTT**, son of Herbert Jonathan Mott (1863-1957) and Lillie Jane Watkins (1870-1944), in May of 1916 in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas. Wilfred was born in Nebraska on 17 May 1894. Alta passed away on 21 Jun 1957 in Burlington County, New Jersey. Wilfred died in August of 1970 in Scott City, Scott County, Kansas. Burial was there, at the Scott County Cemetery. They had four children: Waldo H. Mott, Wilda H. Mott, Anita Mott, and Wendell D. Mott.

KITTIE ADELLA HOWELL was born on 1 Jul 1893 in Linden, Dallas County, Iowa. In 1916, Kittie was a teacher for the Shallow Water, Kansas school. She married **NOEL ADRAIN BURT**, son of Frank Isbel Burt (1866-1953) and Jessie Evelyn Gould (1866-1900), on 17 Aug 1916 in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas. Noel was born on 16 Jul 1894 and he died young, at the age of 31, on 28 Apr 1925 in Scott City, Kansas. In 1930 and 1940, Kittie was living in Hutchinson, Reno County, Kansas and working as a bookkeeper for a local farm implement store. Kittie passed away on 20 Aug 1983 in Cherry Hill, Camden County, New Jersey. Burial for Noel and Kittie was at the Scott County Cemetery in Scott City, Scott County, Kansas.

GEORGE T. HOWELL was born on 1 Jun 1898 in Linden, Dallas County, Iowa. In 1920, George was living in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas and working as a Mechanic. That same year, he married **MAY ROUSEY**, daughter of James Perrian Rousey (1857-1913) and Lucy Grabel (1862-1951). May was born on 27 Jan 1895 in the state of Missouri. She taught school for 37 years in Garden City and Holcomb, both in Finney County, Kansas, Deerfield, Kearny County, Kansas, and Shallow Water, Scott County, Kansas. In 1930, they were living in Deerfield, and George

was working as an Electrical Engineer. They did not have any children. May passed away on 4 Sep 1970 and George died on 26 Mar 1984. Burial for both was at the Valley View Cemetery in Garden City, Kansas.

Newspaper Obituaries

EMMA JANE (WILLIS) HOWELL

The Hutchinson (Kansas) News – Saturday, 4 Feb 1933

GARDEN CITY, Feb 4 – Mrs. Henry Howell, 74, wife of the postmaster at Shallow Water, west of here is dead after a stroke of paralysis. Yesterday they took the body to Linden, Dallas County, Iowa for burial.

HENRY WARD BEECHER HOWELL

The Hutchinson (Kansas) News – January 1938

SCOTT CITY – Henry Howell, 83, former postmaster at Shallow Water, in southern Scott County, died yesterday at the home of a daughter, Edna Gose, in Van Nuys, California. Mrs. Kittie Burt, of Hutchinson, is also one of his daughters. The body will be taken to Linden, Iowa for burial.

AGNES L. HOWELL Daughter of Henry and Emma Howell

The Hutchinson (Kansas) News – Thursday, 28 Dec 1933

SUDDEN DEATH OF A TEACHER AT HOLCOMB

GARDEN CITY – Miss Agnes L. Howell, principal of the primary department of the Holcomb Schools, died in a local hospital Sunday. Funeral services were held for her here yesterday. The body was sent to Linden, Iowa for burial. Miss Howell, employed in Holcomb for several years, was the sister of George Howell of Garden City; W. C. Howell of Havre, (*Hill County*) Montana; Mrs. D. W. Mott of Shallow Water; Mrs. Kitty Burt of Hutchinson; Mrs. Fred Frazier and Mrs. Charles Gose of Des Moines, Iowa. Her father, Henry Howell of Shallow Water, also survives her.

WILLIAM C. HOWELL Son of Henry and Emma Howell

Great Falls (Montana) Tribune – Sunday, 27 Dec 1959

HAVRE – William C. Howell, 71, a retired cab driver, died at a Havre hospital. Funeral services

will be at the Holland & Bonine Funeral Home on Monday at 11 a.m. Burial at the Highland Cemetery in Havre, (Hill County) Montana. Howell was born July 20, 1888, in Linden, Iowa. He married Mina Harden, on 13 Mar 1907, in Dallas, Iowa. Mina died several years ago. Survivors include a son, Gerald, in Colorado, and a daughter, Mrs. John (*Corinne*) Van Wallinga, in Sonoma, California.